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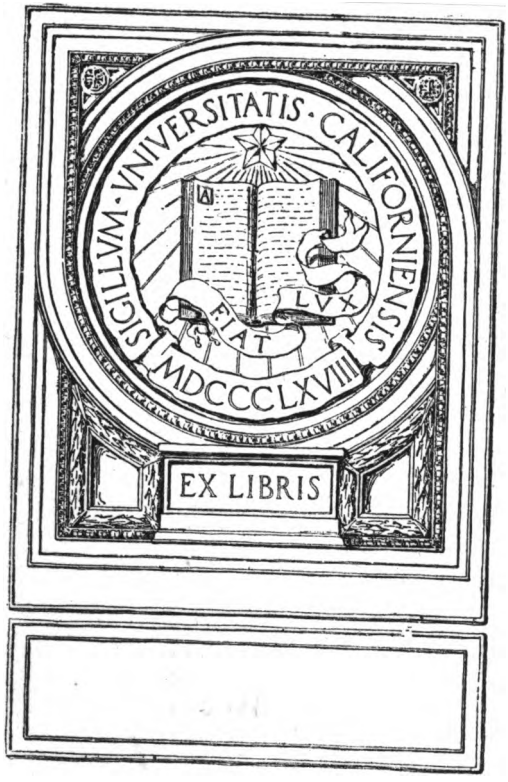

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Christian Origins

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Christian Origins

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Authorized Edition

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PREFACE

THIS book is the outcome of public lectures, delivered at the University of Berlin during the past winter semester, in the presence of the students of all departments and many non-collegiate visitors of both sexes. With almost no other change than the addition of a few notes I sent the manuscript to press. Forced to cover the subject in sixteen lectures, a condensation of the abundant material demanded a selection of the essential, and the regard for the interest of the non-theological public directed the choice. All technical matter, particularly criticism of related literature, had to be omitted; those readers who are interested therein, will find it in my larger work: "Das Urchristenthum, seine Schriften und Lehren, in geschichtlichem Zusammenhang beschrieben," 2 Aufl. 1902.

The viewpoint from which the origin of Christianity is herein described is *purely historical;* the Introduction gives information concerning the meaning of this method and its relation to other methods of treatment. It lies in the nature of things that such a purely historical description of the origin of our religion will differ vastly and in many ways from the traditional Church presentation. Hence,

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this book has *not* been written for such readers as feel satisfied by the traditional church-faith. It may hurt their feelings easily and confuse them in their convictions; I would feel sorry for that because I cherish a respect for every honest faith. But I know that in all classes and circles of society to-day there are many men and women who have entirely outgrown the traditional church-faith and who are possessed of an urgent desire to learn what is to be thought, from the standpoint of modern science, concerning the origin of this faith and concerning the eternal and temporal in it. To go out toward such *truth-seekers* is a duty which the trained representative of science dare not shirk; he may not withdraw where there is the added fear that untrained leaders will push themselves forward and increase the confusion of souls by their arbitrary notions.

It is self-evident, that no historical research-worker considers himself infallible; that would be foolish in any department, but the folly were threefold in the branch of early-Christian history, with its problems of unusual difficulty. Certain as is the declaration in the majority of cases, that something could not possibly be historical reality, so certain it is that the question, what is to be considered the actual course of events, can be answered only by relative possibility. This book, too, does not pretend to contain any more than those results of the critical research in early Christianity which are in

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my opinion most probably true. Nevertheless, I may say that what is here offered to a larger circle of readers for private reflection and consideration is the mature product of more than forty years of earnest study.

Science is ever-progressing and, naturally, the state of knowledge here presented will be but a step in the onward march. In which direction? With certainty, nothing can be foretold, but, judging by all past experience and by many a sign of the present, it may well be supposed that the progress of knowledge will not be toward the old tradition, but rather to a greater departure from it. Hence, we will do well to dwell more and more in the thought, that the real subject of our pious belief is not what has been, but what is eternal! "That alone which never transpired in any place, never becomes time-worn!"

That is no reason at all why the history of the past should be held valueless; it contains the signs and guides of the eternal, but not the final and the highest at which we ought to stop.

OTTO PFLEIDERER.

GROSS-LICHTERFELDE, *March*, 1905.

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INTRODUCTION

THE real *historical* conception of the origin of Christianity is of recent date. So long as the problem was approached with the presupposition of the church belief, it was impossible. If the origin of Christianity consisted in the descent of the second person of the Deity from heaven to earth, in his becoming man in the body of a Jewish virgin, in his bodily resurrection after dying on the cross, and his ascent to heaven, then the origin of Christianity is a *complete miracle,* incapable of any historical explanation. For, the historical understanding of a phenomenon means comprehending it in its causal connections with the circumstances of a particular time and a particular place of human life. The entrance of a superhuman being into the mundane world would constitute a new beginning absolutely, standing in no causal relation whatever with anything preceding; therefore it could not be grasped by analogy with any other human experience, in short, the phenomenon withdraws from all historical explanation.

Such a Christian origin could only be the object of faith, not of historical knowledge. But this faith, according to the Church doctrine, is based on

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God's revelation in the Bible, which had been given in all its parts by God, a direct divine testimony for humanity, hence, also a miracle. The miraculous origin of Christianity finds its support in the miraculous character of the Bible. That is logical and is the only thing possible from that viewpoint. Christians could rest content therewith, so long as religious consciousness lived without guile in the world of the miraculous, the supernatural and the mysterious, and so long as the Bible was regarded by the eye of faith as a source of edification, without testing its separate books with critical understanding. As soon as this was done, it became apparent that the reports of the New Testament concerning the person of Christ are by no means so harmonious as church-faith presupposed, that the Christ of the first three Gospels appears as a real man and not yet as a God become man, that only two of the gospels tell of his supernatural birth and that the narratives of his resurrection and ascension are full of contradictions. As soon as this condition of affairs was seriously considered, the ingenuous Church-belief in the miracle of the supernatural origin of Christianity was shaken and soon made way for the more reasonable and natural conception.

The beginning of this change is to be found in that tendency which appeared in England in the seventeenth century under the name of Freethinking or Deism, spread to the Netherlands and France, and in Germany in the eighteenth century acquired

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the name "Enlightenment" or "Rationalism." Various causes united in developing this movement. After the religious wars, the parties divided by dogmas felt the need for mutual toleration, hence they sought a universally valid norm of truth outside the dogmas, and that could be found only in the reason and experience common to all men. In addition, there came the exercise of scientific thinking in the newly-flourishing natural sciences and mathematics; accustomed by them to the correct sequences of logical thinking as well as the closeness of the causal relation in all natural events, it was impossible to rest content with the simple faith in miracles in the religious field, and there began a search for the natural and reasonable explanation of things.

John Toland's famous book ("Christianity not mysterious, a Proof that in the Gospels nothing is opposed to or beyond the reason") is written from this standpoint. Matthew Tindal sought to prove that Christianity is as old as creation, and that the gospel of Jesus is no more than a new proclamation of that original, natural religion which had been defiled by the additions of heathens and Jewish superstition and the deception of priests. The enlightened followers of the Leibniz-Wolff philosophy in Germany took the same ground; such a one was Reimarus, a scholar of Hamburg, and it is from his "Schutzschrift" (Treatise of defense for the sensible worshippers of God) that Lessing took the "Wolfenbütteler Fragmente." In this publica-

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tion, the evangelical reports of the resurrection of Jesus are subjected to searching criticism; after the miracle has been critically dissected, a supposedly natural explanation of the narrative is looked for in a deception of the disciples, which would have it appear that they stole the body of Jesus.

This is a characteristic example of the want of real historical sense and psychological understanding in handling religious problems, which, without exception, was peculiar to that Rationalism. Commendable as its honest courage of truth and keen as its criticism of dogmatic and legendary tradition were, nevertheless it seemed unable to move beyond mere negation to any kind of satisfying position. Its rigid intellectuality lacked all adaptability to the manner of thinking and feeling of another, of entering into the spirit of past periods and of seeking out with sympathetic understanding the unconscious activity and poetry of the religious imagination. It had not the faintest foreknowledge of the conception of "evolution" in the history of the human spirit; it presupposed that reason employed one method of thinking, alike everywhere and complete from the beginning, and that method it held to be the true one. This very narrow, subjective standard of measure, it applied to every phenomenon of history. Wherever the stories or teachings of the Gospels and the Apostles did not suit, either a forced exegesis would give the desired interpretation or the passage was declared to be an unreal figure of

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speech; but it was just this which robbed the biblical figures of their characteristics and reduced everything to the monotonous plane of a rational ethics, which could never lead one to understand how the movement of Christianity which shook the world could have gone forth from it.

With regard to the evangelical miracle stories this rationalism occupied a peculiarly difficult position; though it did not regard the Bible as the inspired word of God, yet it did consider that the book had been written by authors, who wished to speak truth for the sake of piety, and as eye-witnesses were in position to do so; thus, it felt in duty bound to accept the evangelical miracle stories as historical, and yet, according to the general principles on which its rational world-view rested, it could not really believe in miracles. What was to be done? It was granted that the story told did describe an actual event, but it was stripped of its miraculous character by reducing it to a natural, generally trivial, occurrence which had been regarded as a miracle because of a misunderstanding either on the part of the narrator or the reader.

The rationalist Paulus, for example, explains the miracle of Jesus walking on the waters, by saying that the Greek word had been misunderstood, so that the passage means not "on" but "by" the waters; the miracle at the baptism of Jesus rests on a mistaken interpretation of the fact that a dove chanced to alight near Jesus at that moment; the miracle of

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the transformation of the water at Cana is reduced to the mere trick of a prestidigitator, which Jesus performed as a bit of amusement at the wedding; less comically innocent but repugnant and low is the rational explanation of the birth story, wherein the thought-laden poetry of legend is dragged in the mire of vulgar prose.

From two sides came the release from the narrow limitations of this rationalistic treatment of history; the one was a deeper psychological understanding of religion and its poetic picture language, and the other was the more thorough investigation of the historical sources. In the former case, it was Herder who gave the impetus to the movement, generally designated "Romanticism," which had such powerful effect both for good and evil on the theological treatment of history in the nineteenth century. Herder recognized, with Hamann, that poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race, the natural outlet of the emotions in general, and of religious feeling in particular. This was the key to a new and intimate appreciation of the Bible language, leading beyond the stiff pedantry and petty literalism of the orthodox as well as of the Rationalists.

With the same fine sense of religious content and poetic form which had enabled him to penetrate into the spirit of Hebrew poetry, Herder was able to attune his spirit to the New Testament stories and to realize their edificatory value; but Herder's crit-

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ical understanding did not keep pace with the sympathetic suppleness of his feelings. Because the miraculous gospel stories were congenial to his spirit and his aesthetic taste, therefore he believed that they actually took place, however impossible might be the reconciliation with his world-view as a philosopher. He believed in them because his heart was their advocate and because the reciprocal recognition of idea and reality had become such a need and habit of his intuitive way of thinking that the reasonable demand of a distinction between ideal content and historical fact in the biblical traditions never rose clearly into his consciousness.

The direct identification of idea and reality, which was still naive Romanticism with Herder, Schleiermacher developed into a Christological theory and fixed as the central point of his theological system. Therewith, the miracle once more was placed at the head of Christian history; no longer as the miraculous descent of a God to earth and no longer on the basis of the inspired word of the Bible, but now it was held to be the presupposition of all Christian feeling, that in the man Jesus there actually had been realized the absolute ideal of religious perfection, bliss, freedom from error and sin, and therefore his person demands recognition as the unique and complete existence of God in humanity. In the Ritschlian theology this grew into the bold assertion, that the man Jesus must stand as God for us, because he is the only revelation of God in the world's history.

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Self-evidently this romantic deification of the man Jesus, this precedence of a "super-man" and miraculous being at the beginning of the history of Christianity, hindered the scientific understanding thereof to a high degree; and this was clearly seen in the course of that Life-of-Jesus-Theology which was dominated by the dogmatics of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Naturally enough, after the miracle of a superhuman being was placed at the forefront, miracles of all kinds were stationed at all decisive points along its further history; thus, the continuity of causal connection in all events, the principle of all real historical research, was abandoned. Where this was not so palpable, there was still the attempt to read the ideal of the individual into the Gospels and so paint over characteristic features that they seemed to correspond accurately with the Christ ideal of the present;—this attempt, more or less visible everywhere, was a great hindrance to unprejudiced research into the origin of Christianity.

German theology was first rudely awakened from her romantic illusions by the celebrated "Life of Jesus," by David Frederick Strauss. Not only was the rationalistic critique of the miraculous Bible stories carried out with logical strictness and keenness in every detail, but for the first time a satisfactory explanation of these stories was offered by the employment of the conception of the "myth" or pious folk legend which had long been applied to profane history. According to this new conception,

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the miraculous stories of the Gospels are not supernatural stories (as the Supernaturalists held) nor natural stories (as the Rationalists held), but they are myths, that is, poems or legends; not in the deliberate work of an individual is their origin found, but in the activity of the folk-consciousness, the involuntary thinking and poetizing of the many at once. According to Strauss, the Old Testament served as the prototype, and for the most part furnished the material for the miraculous legends of the Gospels.

The effect of this book was tremendous; in many circles, the impression obtained that it had resolved the whole life of Jesus into a myth, a simple poem lacking all historical foundation. Strauss himself did not seek to make this impression, nevertheless, it was his fault because he stopped at the destructive criticism of the miracle stories, without making any attempt to bare the positive historical kernel hidden in the mythical shell. He had shown that what had been regarded before as the early history of Christianity, had not actually occurred so; but he did no more, for as to what really did take place, the darkness was profound as ever. Strauss was unable to say anything positive on the subject, for he lacked methodical criticism of the source-books.

Under the circumstances, it is not remarkable that shortly thereafter Bruno Bauer, a Berlin critic, who always tended to extremes, exaggerated this mythical interpretation of the Gospels to a denial

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of all historical content. According to Bauer, the life of Jesus does not belong to history, but is the invention of the Evangelist Mark who, in the reign of Hadrian, used the philosophic ideas of his time to sketch the ideal picture of a popular king as opposed to the Roman Caesars. This bold hypothesis which leaves Christianity without any historical Jesus and makes an ideal-poem of the second century its source, was little regarded at first; but lately, it has been taken up by an Englishman, Robertson, who would explain the biblical Christ as a mixture of heathen and Jewish mythology,* and again by Kalthoff, a theologian at Bremen, who traces it back to the social tendencies of the period of the Roman Emperors as its source.†

The only importance which I can attach to these radical mythical hypotheses is that they form the extreme reaction against the one-sided personalistic theory of the Romanticists, according to which Christianity appears in the miraculous person of Jesus, a thing complete, as Athene is supposed to have emerged from the head of Jupiter; whereby the inner connection with the religious ideas and the social conditions of the time are either entirely overlooked or at least greatly underestimated. The more unbiassed the consideration of the sources of

* "Pagan Christs, Studies in Comparative Hierology," by John M. Robertson. Watts & Co., London, 1903.

† Alb. Kalthoff, "Das Christusproblem. Grundlinien zu einer Sozialtheologie." By the same author—"Die Entstehung des Christentums." Diederichs, Leipzig, 1903 und 1904.

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early-Christian history in their relation to the allied phenomena of the history of the period, the clearer becomes the persistent conviction that the origin of Christianity is not to be conceived as merely the resultant of the one person Jesus, but that it is the product of a powerful and many-sided development of the ancient world in which various factors had long been at work. It is the merit of the latest champions of the mythical hypothesis that they emphasized this social-evolutionistic aspect. But in their contention against the Romantic theory, they shoot far beyond the mark, when they imagine that they will be able to explain the origin of Christianity, without the historical Jesus, merely by mass-instinct and mass-tendencies.

Is it thinkable that out of the chaos of the masses, the new congregation could have formed itself without some decisive *deed,* without some fundamental *experience,* which might serve as the nucleus for the crystallization of the new idea? Everywhere else in historical new-formations, the sum-total of existing energies and efforts is directed into one particular channel by the deed of a heroic personality; he fixes the goal and gathers them up into an organism possessing vitality. Just so the impulse to the formation of the Christian congregation must have found a beginning at some particular point, which, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, and the oldest Gospels, can be found only in the person, the life and the death of Jesus.

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The preservation of a golden mean between a Romantic personalism which overlooks the importance of the social environment, and a social-evolutionism which undervalues the importance of the personality in history—that seems to me to be the task of the historian here as elsewhere.

Half a century ago, the great church-historian Ferdinand Christian Baur of Tübingen pointed out this right path. He was the first one who dared to apply to the history of Christianity the thought of "evolution," which had long been normative in every other department of science; he applied that thought with an earnest zeal which is remote even to-day from most of the theologians, supernaturalists, rationalists and romanticists. His opponents reproached him with a lack of understanding of the person of Jesus; this was a gross injustice so far as historical understanding is concerned. He was most hearty in his recognition of the moral greatness of Jesus; but his sober and upright sense of truth did restrain him from the Romantic deification of the person of Jesus and his segregation from all historical conditions and limitations.

As a scholar versed in ancient religion and philosophy, Baur could not possibly grant that the world before Christ had lacked God and spirit entirely and had been immersed completely in the darkness of heathen error; he did find there various seeds of truth, which were positively preparatory for and achieved their fullest development in Christianity.

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If it is true, then, that the varied tendencies of the spirit of the times were gathered together into a higher unity in Christianity, then it could not possibly have appeared in the individual life of Jesus as a fixed and finished product, so that all which followed, as the Romanticists claim, must be regarded as apostasy, degeneration and diseased conditions. *The origin of Christianity is to be thought of as a developing process, in which various other factors were working along with the life-work of Jesus; these united and adjusted themselves gradually but not without inner contradictions and struggles.*

This thought, that the origin of Christianity is not to be understood as a single miraculous deed but as a developing process, in which the life and death of Jesus moved the tendencies of the time to act and react upon one another until they finally united in the new-formation of the Christian Church: this was Baur's fruitful discovery, and science will not and can not lose sight of it again. Whatever has been brought to light by the industrious research of the last decades in the way of new knowledge concerning heathen, Jewish and early-Christian religious history,—and it has not been a little*—has not dis-

* Among the representatives of this branch of science let me make particular mention of Weiszäcker, Baur's successor in the professor's chair at Tübingen, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, Holsten, Hausrath, Schürer, Weiss, Harnack, Wellhausen, Gunkel, Jülicher, Bousset, Schmiedel. The science of early-Christian religious history is much indebted to these men and others for their learned works, however often their results diverge on single points.

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proved Baur's fundamental thought, but has merely corrected and supplemented it in details. For, to be sure, the picture of the early development of Christianity will be a more varied and more intricate one than even Baur supposed. Our acknowledgment of gratitude for this acquisition of increasingly accurate knowledge is the more freely given by reason of the fact that the fundamental thought of Baur's development theory has not been dissipated but is confirmed thereby.

By what means did Baur arrive at this deeper insight into the origin of Christianity? Not by lucky chance, not by *a priori* philosophic speculation (as is often foolishly declared), but by criticism of the biblical sources, the Pauline Epistles and the Gospels, a thorough criticism free from all dogmatic presuppositions. This criticism of the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles produced a picture of the apostolic period, differing greatly from the traditional; it was a period of lively struggle by which Christian freedom from Mosaic law had to be wrung laboriously from Jewish-Christian conservatism.

More important still was Baur's analysis of the fourth Gospel, which resulted in the knowledge that not the Apostle John, but some Hellenistic theologian of the second century was the author of the book; also, that it was not and did not purport to be a historical work, but a doctrinal one, on Jesus, the logos incarnate or the Son of God from Heaven; further, that this Gospel, accordingly, must be

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removed from the group of historical source-books on the life and teachings of Jesus and must be placed among the documents relating to the history of the post-Apostolic Church. The New Testament writings in general were valued by Baur as original documents treating of the various phases and tendencies of development of the early-Christian faith and congregational life; thus, the origin of the New Testament became an essential part of the origin of the Christian Church itself.

So the fetter of Church tradition was broken,—that tradition which held that all New Testament writings were of inspired apostolic origin because, as we shall see later, of purely dogmatic presuppositions, which made a historical understanding of these writings impossible from the beginning. Baur's keenness and unusual loyalty to truth were required to break this fetter of dogmatic tradition, which sealed the entrance to the beginnings of our religion for every historian as tightly as the Cherub's flaming sword did the gates of Paradise.

True, others before Baur had rattled the traditional fetter by doubting the "genuineness" of one or the other writing, but little was gained thereby for the historical understanding. Baur was the first one who had found courage enough to free himself from the traditional fiction; heedless of the dogmatic romancing of the church-fathers, he scrutinized the New Testament writings with his keen, sound eyes to see to what time and place their

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peculiar content, religious character, and historical motives might belong. These writings ceased to be oracles of apostolic inspiration for him as they are for the Church-belief; they became witnesses to the natural origin and growth of the Christian religion and Church. Such a long step forward was this, that single errors in the judgment of certain writings cannot offset it.

When we hear "Return to Tradition" recommended to us to-day, that means nothing else than a return to the fundamental Catholic principle that dogma must rule history; for the tradition concerning the New Testament is the child of the old church-dogma, and the motive for such a return is in its turn dogmatic, namely, the wish to employ the post-apostolic writings as the witnesses for the apostolic period and to substitute for a gradual becoming a completed thing, existent from the beginning, mysterious in origin and incommensurable in authority.

This reactionary Romanticism cannot lead us astray; we still maintain that the origin of Christianity can be understood as actual history only, *when dogma no longer rules history, but when this history is studied according to the same principles and methods as every other.* Only the presupposition common to all historical research is permissible in this case; we, too, can work only from *the analogy of human experience,* the similarity of human nature in the past and in the present, from the causal connection of all external happenings and

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inner psychical experience; in short, from the law-abiding order of the universe which ever conditioned all human experience. Would you call that "a presupposition"? I will not dispute your answer, but remember, it is *the* presupposition, without which there can be no such thing as scientific knowledge: we may justly reckon it as one of the axioms, not to be accepted by one or the other at his own will, but one of the fundamental conditions and forms of all normal activity of the human spirit.

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Book I

PREPARATION AND FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY

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PREPARATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

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PREPARATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

In order to understand the origin of Christianity as a historical development, the preparation in the ante-Christian world demands first consideration. The old apologists and church-fathers were aware of the fact that this preparation was to be found not only in the Jewish religion, but to an equal extent in Greek philosophy. For example, Justin the Martyr says of Heraclitus and Socrates, the philosophers, that they were Christians even though they were commonly considered Atheists; according to Clemens of Alexandria the philosophy of the Greeks was for them an education to Christ, just as the Mosaic law was for the Hebrews. Inasmuch as Greek philosophy influenced the Judaism of the last few centuries before Christ, it seems better suited to our purpose to make that the starting-point.

As early as five hundred years before Christ, the Ionian philosophers Heraclitus and Xenophanes had subjected the mythical folk-faith of the Greeks to destructive criticism. Foolish it is, so they said, to conceive the deity after the image of man; blasphemous to ascribe human shortcomings and wickedness to it; useless to worship it with bloody animal-sacrifice. Over against a multiplicity of

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gods they set up *one* god; neither in figure nor in thought like the mortal, he is the vitalizing spirit and the governing reason which underlies all the change of phenomena. Soon Anaxagoras, the friend of the Athenian statesman Pericles, rose superior to this nature-pantheism and achieved the thought of the supermundane spirit, the cause of order in the universe. But it was Socrates who called into being the decisive movement of a moral world-view which resulted in the suppression of heathen naturalism; of him it is said correctly that he brought philosophy down from heaven to earth.

Socrates held it to be his God-given mission to teach the recognition not of external nature, but of man as a moral being, and by the development of his insight to educate him to virtue. In him, for the first time, the great thought of "autonomous" (self-lawgiving) personality found powerful expression. Not the opinion and the wish of the masses constituted authority for him, but he hearkened to the inner voice of his reason and his conscience ("daemonion" he called it). Of his scholars he demanded self-knowledge, independent testing of traditional opinions, action based on personal insight and belief in the good. Therewith he set himself in opposition to the principle of the authority of custom, society and tradition of the state, on which ancient society rested. This deep-rooted contradiction was the reason why the Athenian judges condemned him to death; he died the first blood-witness

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of "philosophy," that is, the individual spirit awakening to the consciousness of its own peculiar rights. In Plato's portrayal of this witness to truth who was loyal unto death to his profession, to his divine mission, of the moral education of men, who met his end with pious submission and joyous calm, we stand face to face with a greatness and moral spirit rising far above his teachings; it is the spirit of a new epoch in history, which reveals itself in the person of Socrates by his inner self-certainty and pious loyalty to conviction. Thus we may well look upon him as a forerunner and a prophet of Christianity.

Among the pupils of Socrates, who developed the teachings of their master in various directions, there was no thinker so independent and so bold as Plato. The Socratic contradiction of the two kinds of knowledge (the untrue opinion and the true conceptual knowing) ramified into two worlds in the vision of the poet-philosopher Plato. The one became the world of the sensual and the ever-changing phenomena which are akin to ephemeral shadow-pictures without truth or substance; and the other became the world of eternal prototypes or "ideas," which the senses cannot perceive and the thinking reason alone grasps and knows to be the true reality behind the illusion-world of the senses. The supersensual world of ideas, originating in a concept-poem, crystallized into the sum-total of all ideal values for Plato; in them our spiritual life would find its true content and its eternal home.

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Thereupon, it was the psychical doctrine of the ancient Orphic poets and seers which Plato was able to bring into fruitful alliance with his teaching of ideas. Souls, so he taught, originate in the supersensual world of ideas, with which they are related; theirs is a portion of the idea of life, therefore they are being, self-moved, unbegotten and necessarily immortal. Their descent to this world of earth and their union with the earthly body, these are the consequences of an intellectual Fall, the sin consisting of an excess of the ignoble instinct dragging them down to the sensual, over that reasoning part which strives to look upward at divine truth and beauty. Hence, according to Plato, man's task is to free himself from the hindrance of the body and elevate himself to the world of the ideal good whence he came. Being full of evil, man must attempt to fly this world of the senses as rapidly as possible and go thither; but this flight consists in the achievement of the closest likeness to God, and this is done by being righteous and pious with insight.

When a soul persists in cleanliness from the body as behooves its divine nature, and prepares itself for death by perpetual striving after wisdom, then it may hope to go later to its like, the invisible and eternal and divine, where a happy state awaits it, a life of bliss with the gods, free from error and passion and all other mortal ills. But those souls which cling to the sensual and hate the spiritual, are held to the earth by their low instinct and are

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dragged after death into new bodies, animal or human, each after its own kind. Only those souls attain repose in the gods which have withstood the desires of the body, sought salvation and purification through philosophy and nourished themselves by a continued vision of the true and the divine. Thus Plato converts the Orphic teaching of the soul into an ethical idealism, which in its youthful exuberance threatens to go far beyond the world or even to forsake it entirely, but which in truth merely gives the spirit its power to break the chain of crude nature and become master of the world.

Plato's teaching of God shows the same rising above nature to the moral spirit. He takes up the world-regulating spirit taught by Anaxagoras, but finds it inadequate because the thought of a teleological world-government is not seriously employed. In order to supply this defect, Plato makes the divine spirit one with the "idea of the good," which he fixes as the highest purpose-cause of the world and describes as the creative reason of being as well as of knowledge, just as the sun in the physical world causes the sight of things as well as their growth. Thus conceived, the ideas appear as the purpose-thoughts of the creative spirit of deity, which became real in the actual world, just so far as space and time permitted. The reason which constrained the prime mover of all to create the world, Plato assigns to his goodness; because he is good, hence free from envy, he wished that all should be as like to him as possible. Therefore, he created the world in

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his own image,—the most beautiful, perfect creature, his only-begotten son, who became a visible God. The presupposition is that the world is a living being, an organism possessed of a soul; and, inasmuch as that all-permeating soul, the world soul, is the most immediate image and emanation of the deity, Plato could describe the world as the second god and only begotten Son of the Father and prime mover of the universe,—a thought, in which we may recognize one of the germs of the subsequent doctrine of the Trinity.

That, however, is but one aspect of the Platonic view of the world, struggling with the other, that the world is only an imperfect, distorted image of the divine world of ideas divided in time and space,—obscuring real being more than revealing it, more shadow than reality. This latter aspect corresponds to the world-shunning, ascetic side of Plato's ethics, while the former harmonizes with the world-shaping practical-social side. Although the old Hellenic joy of the world is disturbed by this earnest recognition of the chasm between idea and reality, yet the pious confidence in a wise and benevolent providence ever preserves this idealistic thinker from pessimistic grovelling and gloom; providence guides all so that it must co-operate for the welfare of the whole; it has placed each in that position which will enable him to contribute most to the triumph of the good, insofar as he himself wishes the good. For it is Plato's conviction that freedom and responsibility

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for individual volition and action are not excluded by divine providence, but are presupposed thereby. He emphasizes this particularly by pointing out that a divine judgment will come upon the sinner, if not in the world here, with greater certainty in the world beyond.

On the basis of this religious world-view, the ethics of Plato rests; it is essentially different from the ancient Greek utilitarian ethics in its strong emphasis of the absolute value of the good. True morality, according to Plato, is not the "slave-ethics" which restrains from mere desire, which seeks to change pleasure for pleasure like coins, without knowing the proper coin, for which everything ought to be exchanged. That coin is virtue founded on reason, which loves the good for its own inner value and remains loyal to it under all circumstances. If one were to ask whether righteousness is more useful to men than unrighteousness, then the question were equally as unreasonable as to ask whether it is more useful to be healthy than to be sick, or to possess a capable better than a corrupted soul. The upright man must be looked upon as the happy man, even though gods and men fail in proper esteem, though shame and misery be his lot; the wicked must be looked upon as unhappy, even though his sin remains hidden from all the world. For this reason, Plato rejects as immoral the popular principle that good should be done for friends and evil to enemies. It can never be the intention of the right-

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eous to do any one an injury, an enemy as little as a friend. How near the wise Greek approaches Gospel ethics in these thoughts.

Yet Plato stands on ancient Greek ground again when he seeks to find the ideal of righteousness realized not in the life of the individual, but in the social, aggregate life of the State. His famous ideal state is the logical elaboration of the genuine Greek thought of the aristocracy of spirit, culture and science; at the same time, it is the practical counterpart of the theoretical dualism in Plato's philosophy. As idea and phenomenon, the supersensual and the sensual are set up one against the other, so the Platonic state divides into two strongly differentiated classes: the upper class consists of the rulers and guardians of the state, who alone have charge of public affairs and are prepared for their profession by a thorough education in all the arts and sciences; in their strict service of the idea, they must sacrifice all private interests, even those of property and family, and have a community of possessions and wives, regulated by the state. The lower class must rest satisfied with the acquisition and possession of material goods, but are excluded from ideal interests of spiritual culture and political life. This intellectual state, in which philosophers are the kings, belongs, after all, to the few who are cultured and rich in spirit; it leaves the others to their own resources. The Gospels, on the contrary, proclaim the coming kingdom of God, in which all will be

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blessed, even the poor and the ignorant, the weary and the heavy-laden. Similar as they may be in all other respects, at this point behold the vast difference between Platonism and Christianity!

Next to Platonic philosophy, Stoicism (founded by Zeno and Chrysippos in the third century B. C.) was the most important preparation for Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world. In opposition to Plato's dualism, the Stoics returned to the Pantheism of Heraclitus, and united with it the rigid individualism of the Cynics and their proud spirit of freedom. They held the task of philosophy to be essentially practical; it should lead man to virtue and thus to happiness, by teaching him a proper insight into the value or valuelessness of things and thereby free him from the outer world and the unreasoning feelings which make him dependent upon it. Virtue is not merely a part or a condition of the highest good, but it is the highest good itself; for it is the practical wisdom of living, which guarantees inner freedom to men and equanimity in all the circumstances of life. With enthusiastic exaggeration the Stoics proclaimed their ideal of "the wise man"; he alone is free, happy, rich, beautiful, a true king, poet and prophet, friend of the gods, and their peer in perfection and happiness. On the other hand, the fool is bad and miserable throughout, a slave, yes, a man insane.

Since virtue is one and indivisible and ought to be present in its entirety or not at all, the strict

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adherence to their theory would divide men into two classes, those who are perfectly wise and those completely foolish. Naturally, this abstraction could not be carried into practice; the inevitable limitations of the principle were accompanied by a suspicious uncertainty in practical morals. Besides, these practical morals were burdened with the irreconcilable contradiction of the unbounded striving for freedom on the part of the individual and the recognition of social obligations binding the individual to society, its weal and woe.

Among the older Stoics, the former took precedence; this was shown by a self-satisfied pride of virtue and a rigid sternness which smothered all the milder tendencies of the spirit. The later Stoics of the Roman Imperial period, however (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius), show a change in the manner of feeling and thinking, easily explained by the circumstances of that age: the feeling of the solidarity of mankind grows stronger and sympathy for their weakness outweighs the proud condemnation; a more modest, partially pessimistic judgment of the human power of knowledge and will strengthens the religious moods of humility, of submission, of trust in divine aid and providence.

In Seneca this change was peculiarly favored by the influence of Plato's philosophy. Entirely in agreement with Plato, he regards the body as the cause of the evils from which humanity suffers; the body is the galling iron under which the divinely-re-

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lated soul chafes in darkness. Against the burdensome flesh and its downward tug, the soul is ever struggling, ever striving toward the source, whence it was sent, where eternal rest awaits it. This passing life is but the prologue of that better and longer life. Hence, our earthly possessions are to be looked upon as the furnishings of an inn, from which we must journey on; we can carry out no more than we have brought in. We ought have no fear of death; it is the birthday of the eternal which releases us from the thralldom of earth. It is the task of philosophy to prepare us for this end. Philosophy teaches us to know our weakness, awakens us from the deep sleep of error, demands betterment of the will and thus produces an inner conversion, which is but the initiation of a continuous improvement. In order to win the prize of freedom, we must take up the unceasing struggle against our desires and sins; we must throw off that which gnaws at the heart, even though the heart itself be torn from its roots. But this work of self-emancipation and purification must be accompanied by kindness toward others and active love of humankind. We must feel ourselves to be members of one great body. Nature has made us all out of the same matter and created us for the same ends; she has implanted the love for one another, social instincts, propriety and justice. Nature's order makes the doing of ill worse than the suffering of injury. Consequently, we ought to practice humanity toward all, toward the divinely-

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related soul of the slave as well as that of the foreign comrade, the fellow-citizen of the greater Fatherland which compasses the world,—these souls ought to be respected; for, we are born in one kingdom of God, and obedience to Him is freedom.

This milder, humane ethics of later Stoicism corresponds to a deep-seated religious tendency: God is no longer considered merely an energy at work throughout the universe, but it is the wise and benevolent Providence, to whom we may humbly submit with perfect confidence in his guidance—as the holy spirit of the good, making its presence known within us. Seneca says that God assumes a paternal attitude toward the good and loves them manfully; amid pain and labor, he suffers them to gather true strength. Therefore the pious should say: I am compelled to nothing, I suffer nothing contrary to my will, I do not serve God slavishly, but I am in accord with him, I follow him with all my heart and there is no compulsion. The proper worship of God consists in the recognition of the divine rulership of the world and in the imitation of divine goodness; following His example, we ought to give even to the ingrate, for the sun rises upon the godless, the sea spreads its bosom for the pirate, the wind blows favorably not only for the good, and the rain falls on the fields of the blasphemer. Not temples and not images are needed for the adoration of God, for God is near thee; he is with thee, he is within thee. For, in us

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there dwells the holy Spirit as the observant guardian of our good and evil; as we treat him, so he treats us. Without God, no one is a good man; else how could he rise superior to fate without God's help? God alone gives us great and noble intentions; God dwells in each good man. Divine seeds are strewn in the human bodies; where they find tender care, there they take root and grow to a likeness of their prototypes. In the vision of great human models lies the means of developing these divine seeds; hence Seneca demands of us that we "attract" the spirit of a great man, cast a look into the soul of a good man and see in him the picture of sublimest virtue, radiant with nobility and peace; before such a picture we would stand in awe and consuming love. If our eyes were cleansed, we would even discover the picture of virtue under the shell of the body; under the stress of poverty, degradation and shame, we would recognize it and the vision of its loveliness would delight us though clad in ugliest garb.

It is not surprising that such expressions gave many the impression that Seneca must have known Jesus Christ and because of the sight of him, spoken in such enthusiastic terms of the power of the moral ideals exhibited by one personality. But, without doubt, such is not the case; such expressions on the part of the Stoic philosopher have greater value for the historian, just because they are not dependent on the Christian Gospels; they are of greater impor-

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tance as witnesses of a widespread moral-religious manner of thought and tendency in the Graeco-Roman world of those days,—closely related to the Christian and preparing heathen soil for the Gospels. This was an ethics which led men to look within and freed them from the allurements and the terrors of the world; it purified man's soul by demanding control of the passions, particularly sensuality; it taught man to recognize in inner freedom and purity the dignity of the human personality, and it gave full force to the respect for man as such; in the divinely-related, reasoning nature of man, finally, it found the common bond of brotherhood of all men, irrespective of rank or nationality and from this conviction evolved the motive for a new and crowning virtue, love of human brothers, humanity. (In this sense, the word *humanitas* was first used by the Stoics.)

This system of ethics was built up on a religious world-view, in which there was spiritualization and moralization just as there had been in heathen Naturalism. The popular gods of polytheism lost their meaning; some became symbols for powers of nature, others became subordinate deities (similar in nature to the angels of the Bible), who no longer hindered the uniform world-rule of the *one* highest God, prime-mover and governor of the world. All the naturalistic traits and human passions which mythical tradition had attributed to the gods, were not to be found in the nature of this world-governing

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God; He was thought as perfect reason and goodness; his government as a wise providence, paternally caring for us and in his educative wisdom regulating even evil as a means for the best. As a reasoning being, man feels himself intimately related to this world-governing reason; in himself, he feels the presence of God as a holy Spirit, as a warning and wakeful conscience, as a power making for good and for elevation beyond the world. Finally, this religious experience serves as a guarantee for the hope that the divinely-related soul after separation from its earthly body will find in the celestial world of light that highest freedom, as well as peace and quiet, which could only be striven for here below.

The Stoic philosophy of the Imperial period had taken this worldly hope from the philosophy of Plato and the wisdom of the Orphic mysteries. In this ethical hero-worship to a certain degree, Seneca rationalized the belief (customary in the rites of the Orphic-Pythagorean and other mysteries) in revelation-authorities and salvation-mediators. In general, that idealistic view of the world, found most among the later Stoics, may be designated as the first attempt to combine the rapture of religious mysticism with the ideals of a rational ethics; therewith, a step was taken toward the unification and purification of religion and ethics, which Christianity achieved. This was beyond the power of Stoicism, because its ethical idealism was too abstract to construct a religion and because its religion was not

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wholly free from the popular polytheism and naturalistic pantheism.

Stoicism grasped with remarkable clearness the fundamental religious problem of the connection of the moral freedom of man and his dependence on God; but it did not solve the problem, and it could not have done so, because the freedom of man was taken in the negative sense of the withdrawal from the external world into his own soul, and not in the positive sense of the self-submission of man to the absolute divine purpose of the world. The Stoic teaching of purpose confined itself to nature and either lost itself in trifles or stood helpless and resigned before the great evils of the world. The teleological consideration of history from the viewpoint of a divine education of the race for the purpose of realizing the moral ideal in each and every human being—that was entirely foreign to the individualistic, unhistorical mode of Stoic thinking. Therefore its pious submission lacked the moral enthusiasm of that love, which at once loses and finds itself while striving for God's highest purpose and the common good of all. This true synthesis of moral freedom and religious dependence did not appear before Christianity brought it. In more than one way, Stoicism prepared the way for it, but had nothing to take its place; rather, by concession to the popular belief and worship of the gods, Stoicism sank to the former level of Nature-religion and ended in a slavish superstitious belief in demons, oracles and prodi-

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THE JEWISH-GREEK PHILOSOPHY OF PHILO

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THE JEWISH-GREEK PHILOSOPHY OF PHILO

Of greatest importance for the preparation of Christianity was the combination of Greek philosophy and Jewish religion, which happened among Hellenic cultured Jews of Alexandria under the rulership of the Ptolemys in the two centuries immediately preceding Christ. In the writings of the philosopher and theologian Philo, an Alexandrian Jew (born 20 B. C., died 54 A. D.), the ripest fruit of this combination has been preserved for us. Equally versed in Rabbinic learning and in Greek philosophy, particularly Plato and the Stoics, he strove to interpret the latter into the Old Testament writings; for this purpose, he employed the method of allegorical explanation, not original with him, but for the first time applied with such boldness and thoroughness.

In this fashion, a uniform system of thought could not be built up; at every point the differences in the artificially fitted thought-series was apparent. Above all is this true of his teaching of God, in which philosophic exclusiveness stands in unmediated contradiction to religious belief in revelations. According to Philo, God is elevated beyond the world throughout, and incomparable with any finite

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being; so that there can be no imperfection, nay more, no particular attribute can be predicated of God. He is better than the good and the beautiful, purer than the one; man cannot know what he is or that he is not; he is neither in time nor space, knows neither change nor needs; he is absolute being.

Such Agnosticism cannot be a halting-place for the religious thinker, and he adds positive predicates, arising from the relation of God to the world; God is the effective cause of all and the reason in all, comparable to light and the human soul, but differing from every finite thing in that it is always active and never passive. To this Stoic attribute of the all-producing power of God, Philo adds the Platonic attribute of his goodness and grace; therein lay the cause of the creation of the world, that preserves the harmony of the universe, that manifests itself in the inexhaustible abundance of kindness which God showers upon all creation and above all upon man. Everything that is good in the physical and moral world is God's gift and only good can come directly from him; evils are the punishments imposed by the subordinate spirits, but at the command of God. That grace goes before righteousness with God and that He stretches forth the saving hand even to sinners, was an important conviction to Philo; the Platonic teaching of God's goodness without envy may have contributed thereto, equally as well as the God-idea of such Prophets as Jeremiah and

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Hosea. However, this religious conviction of the unenvying goodness of God is opposed to the dualistic world-view, which Philo shared with all the men of his period; according to that view, the material world is far too bad for God to act upon it without mediation. Philo believed that he had found the solution of this difficulty by mediation of the divine activity through supersensual mediatory beings; these he designated partly as incorporeal powers (Stoics), partly as ideas (Plato), and partly as angels (Old Testament). At times he selects two from among them, Power and Goodness, as the highest; then again he says, there are six highest (the number of the Persian Amschaspans or Archangels), and among them the Logos is first.

This Logos-conception, the pivotal point of Philo's system, combines the Jewish idea of the creative *word* of revelation with the Stoic thought of the active, divine *reason* in the world. As for the Stoics, so for Philo, the Logos is the world-forming and world-sustaining principle which acts by separating and uniting opposites, hence its names, the bond the law, the necessity of all, or all-permeating, the all-ordering and all-guiding. But the Philonic Logos differs from the Stoic, in that he does not identify it with God or the world substance, but makes it something intermediate between them; his name is first-born son of God, oldest Angel, image and plainly-spoken, a " second God "; since the creation, he has been the mediator of divine revelation,

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the model for all matter, and at the same time the power by which matter was shaped into the world. In the history of man, especially in the history of the people of Israel, he was from the beginning the mediator of all divine revelation; at once, high priest and advocate (paraclete) of men before God. In general, he is not only the model, but the continuous source of the good and the true in man; those souls in which he dwells, to which he imparts himself as the real bread from heaven, and they alone, can be saved from the universal sinfulness and find the homeward path from the foreign land of earth to the heavenly hearth of souls.

In such fashion, the Philonic Logos combines the philosophic thought of divine reason which dwells in the world and in men with the theological ideas of a personal mediator of revelation and messenger of God, like Hermes, the mythical messenger of the gods, whom Stoic theologians regarded as the personified Logos. Such mediary beings, half philosophical and half mythical, were favorite subjects of speculation in that period and met the need for something wherewith to fill in the great gap between God and the world.

Philo's teaching about man combined Platonic and Stoic thought with biblical tradition. Philo agreed with Plato in looking upon the earthly body as a prison for the soul descended from above; it was the root and seat of evil, error and wickedness. He sought to harmonize this theory with the biblical

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story of creation, by finding in the two narratives (Genesis 1 and 2) a twofold creation: First, an incorporeal, celestial, ideal man, and then the man of earth, a mixture of angel and animal, resulting from the combination of a higher part with matter of earth. The salvation of man from the thrall of sensuality and his elevation to the divine model,—these are impossible to man's unaided powers, but can be achieved by the aid of divine powers; particularly, by aid of the Logos, descending into souls and sanctifying them as temples of God. Man's part is but a passive reception of the divine power; hence, Philo praises faith as the royal virtue uniting us to God, as the most beautiful sacrifice which the pious can offer, as the only possession which does not deceive, the staunch consolation of life, the abundance of hope, the heritage of bliss. Love belongs with faith, as "the twin sister of piety." But the highest object, to which knowledge and activity are but leading steps and means, is, according to Philo, the mystical seeing of God, which is the portion of the perfect in their moments of ecstatic rapture when the human light sets before the rising light of the divine. For, he says, our understanding departs when the divine spirit arrives, and it returns after the latter has departed, because the mortal and the immortal cannot dwell together.

At this, its sublimest height, the peculiar character of this religion reveals itself in its strength and in its weakness: a sincere piety, a deep feeling of de-

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pendence on God, an active longing for elevation above everything finite to a community with the eternal God,—in short, a mysticism of the pious soul rising far above the limitations of the national religion, the earthly-eudaimonistic dreams of the Messiah and the legal formalism of Judaism, a mysticism with but one purpose, to find God and be blessed in Him. But is this ardent longing for salvation and union of man with God, which Philo voices, really fulfilled? Could it be fulfilled, in view of the presupposition of that crass dualism of God and World which Philo had taken over from Plato and exaggerated? The union can take place only in the condition of unconscious ecstasy, in which all reasonable thought and volition are submerged, because it is Philo's opinion that the human spirit cannot dwell with the divine.

Despite all mediation, the antithesis of God and man remains insurmountable for Philo; he cannot grasp the thought that the highest revelation of the divine spirit is man's spiritual life with its reasonable content of the true and the good. Therefore, though Philo approaches the theology of John, he stands outside the threshold of Christianity; he knows nothing of an "incarnation of the logos," a historical and permanent realization of the divine principle in the personal and communal life of God's children. But Philo was a preparation for Christianity, in that he demanded of the hellenistic Judaism of the Dispersion the spirit of individualis-

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tic, inward-turned piety and a universally broadened morality; therewith he blazed the way for an ethical-spiritual religion, based on monotheism, but freed from the limitations of Judaism.

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PREPARATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN JUDAISM

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PREPARATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN JUDAISM

THE development of Palestinian Judaism from the second century before Christ had been in the reverse direction; there, the spirit of legal and narrow national religion implanted by the lawgiver Ezra triumphed increasingly over the piety of the Prophets and the Psalmists, which survived in the hearts of a few. This opposition had existed previously in the Jewish congregation, founded by Ezra; but it had been latent under the Persian and Greek rule. It did not become acute until the national-religious reaction consequent upon the threatened Hellenization of Judaism under Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian monarch; the Maccabean heroes led the reaction to victory and ever after the Pharisees were its powerful support. This caused the Jewish Law to become the dividing barrier which prevented Jewish participation in Grecian culture, and the narrowing yoke which was felt more keenly by the conscientious (recall Saul-Paul!). But this later development of Judaism must not cause us to forget that it had not always been so. In the Judaism of the fourth and third centuries B. C. there still lived that deep and honest piety, classically expressed in the Psalms; there were thinkers who

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had kept in contact with Greek culture, and regardless of national and legal limitations solved the riddles of the universe according to their own ideas —these were the authors of the so-called "wisdom-books." While Pharisaic legalism is a negative preparation, we recognize the wisdom-books and the Psalms as a positive preparation of Christianity in Judaism.

The individualization of the religious consciousness is common to the wisdom-books and the Psalms. Previously religion had been a common possession of the people of Israel, each one being part owner by virtue of birth; now, it became the personal attitude of the individual. Pious is he who fears God and trusts in Him, who holds Him ever in his sight and in his heart, who is pure of heart and upright in action, who even in misfortune clings hopefully and trustingly to God. This is the ideal of righteousness as found in the Psalms, in the Proverbs and in Sirach. It was, as ethical-religious ideal, independent of the ceremonial law (which the pious man respected as the unquestioned basis of the religion of his people). He did not feel the Law a burden, for habit had made familiar custom of it; but he did not recognize it as an adequate standard of measure for moral self-judgment, because he had unconsciously grown beyond it. Hence, the pious considered that only those who shared the pious attitude belonged to God's congregation; he looked upon the children of the world and the indifferent as godless

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people on the same plane as heathens, even though they were Jews by birth and to all outward appearances observed the Law. He felt divided from them by a deep chasm, and hated them passionately; the more their power and social standing enabled them to rise above the pious poor and oppress them, the greater his hatred.

If Jewish blood-ties and social position ceased to have weight in religious estimation, it was natural that national limitations from the outside world ceased to have any religious importance; universalistic enlargement was the inevitable complement of the individualization of the religious consciousness. At bottom, this was the logical outcome of monotheistic belief in God: the more intensely the thought of the moral world-rule of one God was taken up, so much the less possible was its limitation to the Jewish nation alone. Therefore, the great prophet of the Exile, usually called the Babylonian Isaiah, designated the Jewish people as the chosen servant of God in the sense that it is their mission to become a teacher of the heathen, a light for the nations dwelling in darkness, a mediator between God and man. The last Prophet, Malachi, says that God's name is great everywhere among the nations of the East and West and that clean offerings are sacrificed to him everywhere; meaning that throughout the human world there are those who acknowledge and serve the one true God. In this sense, the author of Job makes a non-Jew the repre-

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sentative of a purer belief in God as against the Jewish law of retribution. And as in Job, so in the other wisdom-books of that period, the specifically Jewish name of God, Jahve, gives way to the more general names such as Elohim and El, Adonai and Eljon, names in use among the heathen. No longer is the God of Israel spoken of, but the God of Heaven, later simply 'Heaven.' All of which shows plainly that Universalism ruled not only the Jews of the Dispersion but even those of Palestine, and that, in principle, they were international despite their adherence to the old customs.

This individualization of religion gave rise to new religious problems, which were a source of doubt and unbelief for many, while for others they gave an impulse to the deepening of faith. It was axiomatic in the religion of the Prophets, that divine righteousness manifests itself by giving the reward or punishment merited by human action; but they thought of this as applying only to the deserts and fate of the nation as a whole, and conceived thus the belief involved no serious difficulties. When, however, the pious individual began to compare his own and other individual happiness or misery with the guilt or the innocence of each, the serious question could be suppressed no longer: Is the frequent experience of the happiness of the godless and the misery of the pious compatible with divine righteousness? The answer to this question was the more difficult, because neither the Judaism of that

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day nor that of the Prophets pointed to a resolution of the earthly disharmony in the retribution of the world to come. They sought the reward for righteousness in earthly happiness alone, especially in long life, children and prosperity; misery on earth, particularly sickness and horrible death, poverty and shame, these were signs of God's disfavor toward sinners. The world to come had not yet become their hope; for the Prophets, as for the Psalm and Proverb writers, an eternal future awaited the nation of God, not the pious individual; for from Hades ("Sheol"), the land of shadow or darkness, of oblivion or silence, there is no return, all suffer a like fate there and none can praise God more.

With these presuppositions it was indeed no easy task to harmonize the belief in a just, divine retribution with the experience of the misery of the pious. The more remarkable is the courage of certain religious thinkers, especially the author of Job, who strove to solve these dark riddles. The author of Job makes the friends of that patient man represent this Jewish theory of retribution; presupposing that every pain is righteous return for some corresponding sin of the sufferer, they conclude that Job's great sufferings must grow out of heavy and secret guilt. Possessing a clear conscience, Job defends himself by reference to his lack of any conscious guilt; he appeals from the God of tradition, the supposed wrathful retributor of secret guilt, to the true God of his belief, the honest witness and judge

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of hearts, who does not work for man to see, but who speaks clearly and undoubtedly in man's conscience. The certainty of his own clear conscience, the consciousness of community with God, which no misfortune can shake—these are the certain guarantee that, notwithstanding all contrary appearances, God is in truth with him and for him, that even if it be not until after his death, God will certainly appear as a witness for him and preserve his honor before all the world. In fact the poet makes God appear to uphold the pious sufferer against the suspicions of his orthodox friends; God's mouth condemns the friends' method of defending Him at the price of truth and righteousness. So the traditional Jewish doctrine of retribution, which makes external welfare the measure of man's moral worth, is refuted; the judgment of moral conscience comes into its rights, and the inner peace of religious consciousness is made independent of all external accidents of fate; the moral belief in God is removed beyond reach of all the complexities of outer experience by being anchored safe in the individual conscience.

By this deep thought, the heart of the book, the Jewish teacher puts himself on the same ground with Plato. He, too, visualized the absolute value of moral goodness in his picture of the upright sufferer, who rests certain of his inner happiness despite persecution and misinterpretation, and trustfully believes that God cannot desert the righteous.

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On this high plane of a world-conquering certainty of faith stands the author of the seventy-third Psalm, who takes refuge in God from the darkness of the world-order: "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; Thou hast holden my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Wherever it appears, in Palestine, in Greece or anywhere else, such an attitude commands recognition as Christianity before Christ. However, these are isolated peaks, high above the average of the popular religion. The Jews, generally, maintained the standpoint of Job's friends, whose doctrine of retribution is one at bottom with crude religious utilitarianism. The inevitable conflict between this belief and the facts of experience drove many, like the author of the "Wisdom of Solomon," to doubt and unbelief, and their final word is "All is vanity."

This skeptical mode of thinking was widespread among the upper classes of the Jewish people at the beginning of the second century B. C., it had been favored by their acquaintance with Greek culture, which under such circumstances acted as a disintegrating power, undermining the faith and the customs of the fathers. Things came to such a pass that the worldy-minded, priestly aristocracy at

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Jerusalem (the Sadducees) offered to aid King Antiochus in the Hellenization of Judaism. But the forcible attempt to carry out this plan resulted in a reaction of the national and religious spirit of the people; the Maccabeans who shook off the yoke of foreign authority and the Asideans (the predecessors of the Pharisees) made common cause for the maintenance of the Jewish Law. The victorious reaction against the deserters led to a strengthening and stiffening of the legal spirit of Judaism. As a protection against heathenism, accurate observance of the Law in all its ceremonial externals was insisted upon. The letter of the written law ("Thora") was not all, but the net work of regulations was continually enlarged; the circle of things permitted was gradually made smaller by things commanded; and the greatest stress was laid upon the elaborations added by the scribes, and their interpretations of the letter, which were called old traditions. Particularly the commands concerning Sabbath observances, cleansings and purifications were developed most minutely and strict conformity was commanded. Moral actions were subordinated, while deeds of holiness (fasts, prayers and almsgiving) were regarded as most important. In the Pharisaic sense, the ideal of righteousness was no longer the attitude of the Psalms nor the moral guidance of the Proverbs, but legal correctness according to the rules of scribes; everything depended on formal exactness of omis-

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sion and commission,—Judaism became a religion of service by deeds and a set of legal axioms ecclesiastic and civil. The claims of reward and the reckoning with God took on a new aspect. The attitude of the soul was not of weight, but individual deeds were counted; according to Pharisaic theology, the meritorious deeds were set over against the transgressions, and the balance sheet drawn in heaven showed at every moment how the spiritual account stood. Since, by their extraordinary, meritorious services (to which martyrdom especially belonged), certain holy men heaped up a superabundant treasure of credits, the excess might be transferred to the needy sinner for the mitigation of his indebtedness and make up for his lack of meritorious acts: thus we find in this Jewish theology the doctrine of the abundance of grace and the atoning merit and expiation through saints.

Accurate performance of all the ordinances and commands of the written and unwritten law required more than the ability of the average man; simply to know them all, a special training was needed. In the circle of the Pharisee the thought ran: "The unlearned cannot preserve himself from sin and the layman cannot really be pious;" religion was their study and their art, hence they looked down with pride upon the mass of poor and unlearned men, who neither knew the minute rules of law, nor had the means or the leisure to obey them. A strong line was thus drawn between the tech-

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nically trained virtuosos of piety and the unlearned mass ("am-haarez"), who learned no religion in school, who were avoided by these proud and righteous for fear of contaminating contact, and who were left to shift for themselves in things spiritual and temporal. The Law, at one time the joy and the glory of the pious, became an oppressive yoke and life-destroying letter, benumbing Jewish life. Pharisaism not only spoiled morality by subordinating service to one's neighbor, to the practice of piety, but it took the soul out of religion by barring the approach to God through an idolatry of the Law, which elevated it even above God. The Rabbis opined that God himself devotes his leisure hours on Sabbath to the study of the Thora!

However much the scribes clung to the traditional limitations of Judaism, they were unable to suppress every movement. While the dike of the Law and tradition was being built higher and higher to guard against the rationalism of Hellenic culture, the flood gates were opened to the turbid waters of Oriental wisdom. Speculations concerning the realm of the spirits, concerning angels and demons, concerning resurrection, last judgment and places of retribution in the world to come poured in. Attributes of God, such as wisdom, word, spirit and glory, which before had been personified occasionally in poetic language, were now made independent, personal beings, like the Amschaspans or archangels, mediating between God and the world. The old notion of

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divine messengers (angels) was dogmatically developed: various classes were differentiated, the highest were named and commissioned to do specified work in governing the world. Protecting angels were apportioned to peoples and persons; natural phenomena even were made subject to angels, restoring the heathen nature-gods under new labels. As in the Persian religion, the army of the good spirits was opposed by an army of evil ones; so in Judaism, the demons, which had formerly been unimportant shadowy beings, achieved the new distinction of fallen angels; under their greatest leader, Satan, they formed a kingdom inimical to God. But now Satan became the opponent of God, the prince of all the realms in open enmity to the kingdom of God. In the book of Job, Satan was reckoned among the heavenly host of God, and heavenly attorney or accuser of men before God. Now, it was Satan who tempted our first parents, and through him sin and death found entrance into God's good creation; sickness was recognized as the working of demons who had taken possession of men; opposing heathen nations were looked upon as tools of Satan, who was employing them to persecute God's kingdom of the Jews. Both Jew and Persian nourished the hope that Satan's rule in the present world-period has its limit fixed in God's council. According to the Persian religion, the war between the good and the bad God is the content of the world's history, which falls into four periods of

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three thousand years each; at the end of that time the world will be judged, the realm of inimical spirits destroyed, the Savior will appear and cause the resurrection of men and the creation of a new world purified of all evil. These thoughts now forced their way into Judaism and became dominant in those new pictures of the future collectively called "apocalypses."

The first work belonging to this category is the Book of Daniel, which contains a philosophy of history from the Jewish theocratic standpoint in the form of a vision put into the mouth of a mythical saint of the time of Nebukadnezzar. Following Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of trial, the author of Daniel recasts it into seventy year-weeks and fixes the turning point of the salvation that is to be in his own period, the time of the Maccabean wars. In the fall of the Macedonian monarchy he espies the coming end of the last of the four heathen world empires, after which there will begin the eternal rule of the "saints' (that is, the Jews) and the world's history will come to a close. Thus the prophetic expectation of a future "messianic" period of glory for the Jewish people, which had been lost to sight during the Hellenic rule, was once more moved into the foreground, at the same time achieving an important and decided shift toward the supernatural, the post-mundane and the miraculous.

The natural opposition of the Jews to the other peoples becomes the absolute opposition of the king-

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dom of God whose origin is in heaven and the demonic realms whose origin is in the depths. No longer the natural succession of the political events guided by God brings about the decision, but a sudden and miraculous catastrophe annihilates the opposition to God and brings about the dominion of the kingdom of the saints, symbolized by a human figure which appears before God on a heavenly cloud. Based on the pessimistic view of the times, and resting on the background of Persian dualism, this expectation of the sudden coming of God's dominion through the agency of a miraculous catastrophe which would end present world conditions and initiate a new one, dominated the mood and thought of Judaism in the last century before Christ.

In harmony with this supernatural origin of the kingdom of God, they thought of its constitution: though it was to be realized on earth, yet the pious of old were to be sharers in its happiness and would be resurrected for that purpose; while the godless would rise to horror eternal. Probably Persian influence caused the popularity of this hope of resurrection, expressed for the first time in the Book of Daniel. In the later apocalypses, such as Henoch, there was added the notion of places of retribution in the world to come—Gehenna or Hell for the souls of the godless, and Paradise for the pious. This idea of the immortality of disembodied souls in the future world was entirely strange to the old Israelitish religion; alongside the belief in resurrection,

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it had long been current in the Persian religion, and formed the meeting-point of Platonic, Alexandrian and New-Pythagorean philosophy, as well as the various mystery-sects. The hope of a blissful fate for the pious in the world to come was the consolation of the world-weary souls of that age. Small wonder that the growing desperation of the nation caused the Jews to take up this belief in individual immortality, without, however, giving up the old prophetic hope of a future period of earthly salvation for the entire Jewish nation.

These two thought-series, the spiritualistic belief in immortality and the national hope of a Messiah on earth, existed side by side unrelated; or an attempt was made to arrange a compromise between them, so that the brief earthly messianic period of salvation (the so-called "millennial kingdom") should precede the eternity of perfect conditions destined to follow.

This double picture of the future corresponded to the variation in the idea of the person of the "Messiah." According to the apocalypse of Henoch, the Messiah is a supermundane, semi-divine person, the mysterious "son of man," who was hidden with God before creation and will descend from above at a specified time in order to judge the world and save the Jewish nation. In the "Psalms of Solomon," which originated in Pharisaic circles about the middle of the last century before Christ, the Messiah is described in the manner of the ancient prophetic

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ideal—a man of the earth, of the seed of David, who will conquer his enemies with divine help and will rule the Jewish people with a mighty and righteous government.

How far these differing apocalyptic ideas had taken hold in the popular religion of the time of Jesus, it is difficult to say with certainty. We must not forget that Judaism did not have a dogmatic doctrinal law, as did the Christian Church later,—a law which all were in duty bound to believe. The Law regulated only what was to be done and what was forbidden, while the belief in one God and His Revelation was naturally presupposed; as to the rest, each had greatest liberty of belief and of hopes. Had not that been the case how could the Sadducees, the priestly aristocracy at the head of the religious life of the community, have rejected all apocalyptic ideas of angels, resurrection and world-to-come, confining themselves to the written Law. The Pharisees, supported by the laity, were the bearers of the national messianic hope and the new apocalyptic ideas, the belief in angels, resurrection, judgment and retribution in the world to come; national-messianic fanaticism involved them in the political affairs of the world and made them the democratic rivals of the aristocratic Sadducees.

In contradistinction to both parties, the Essenes were a purely religious brotherhood, caring not at all about politics, and leading the quiet life of work and ascetic self-training of monastic seclusion.

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Strict as they were in the performance of Sabbath regulations and rites of purification (outdoing the Pharisees therein), yet they differed from the rest of the Jews by peculiar traits. They rejected bloody sacrifices because they regarded their daily baths in cold water and their common meal, with its prayer of sanctification, as a purer worship of God. They rejected slavery as a form of unrighteousness, contrary to nature. The majority of them scorned marriage, because the charm of a wife and the care for children robbed a man of freedom and made him selfish. They rejected the idea of property, and held all things absolutely in common; upon his initiation into the brotherhood, each one placed all his possessions in the common treasury of the Order, and the wages of the members went into the general fund. These moneys were used to pay for the necessaries of life for the members of the Order and for the performance of deeds of charity.

The Essene brotherhood had a hierarchical organization and strict discipline; grades of holiness divided them into four ranks, and all the members were pledged to strict obedience to superiors. A novitiate of three years preceded admission into the Order; misdemeanors and expulsion were passed upon by a court of at least one hundred members. Frankness and truthfulness of the brethren to one another and secrecy in regard to traditions and sacred writings were strictly commanded by law. The brothers lived a simple life, strictly regulated; each

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one had to do his own kind of work during the week, looking after the fields, the garden, the cattle or working at some manual labor to satisfy the simplest needs of life; trade was prohibited as well as any service abetting war and luxury. Those who had the ability to act as soothsayers and wonderhealers were permitted to go to the people who desired their help or their counsel; the medical and prophetic powers of the Essenes are often praised. On Sabbath, the brothers assembled, and for the edification of all, the sacred writings (secret writings of the Order, apocryphal and apocalyptic in nature, as well as the Old Testament) were read and interpreted by those best versed in such matters. Philo says the object of their instructions was to educate to piety, purity, righteousness and knowledge of duties, along three lines—love of God, of virtue, and of man. The love of God demanded the purity of the whole of life, including the physical; also freedom from all deception. The Essenes considered an oath as bad as perjury or falsehood. The love of God demanded especially the belief in the beneficent providence of God as the cause of all good and nothing evil. Love of virtue was to be made manifest by self-control, moderation, freedom from greed and ambition for glory; love of men by benevolence, decency, sympathy, readiness to aid the sick and incapacitated, and reverence of the aged. The Essenes not only lived for these moral principles, but many died for the faith in the Jewish wars. This power of world-

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abnegation came from their belief in the immortality of the soul, which had descended from above and striven for freedom from the bodily fetters, and from the belief in future retribution, when the good will walk in the fields of the blessed beyond the ocean, and the wicked will go down into the dark depths of Hades.

The similarity of this doctrine with the New-Pythagorean and Orphic teaching of the soul and the future world would suffice to show the close historical connection between the Essenes and these Hellenistic sects; but the other Essene peculiarities mentioned point to the same fact. Whether this Hellenistic influence (noticeable in the Jewish-Alexandrian brotherhood of Therapeutes also) was accompanied by other Oriental influences—Persian, Syrian, or even Buddhistic—that is a question which may be passed over the more readily, inasmuch as New-Pythagoreanism itself probably depends upon Oriental Gnosticism.

So close a connection between Essenism and Christianity was not seldom accepted in former days that Jesus himself was looked upon as an Essene. Certainly, that view was erroneous, and it is generally conceded to-day that it was an error; the distressing fear of the stain of impurity caused by family and social life, the misanthropical seclusion of the monastic order, the slavish subjection to the discipline of the Order which (according to Josephus' description) made them appear like irresponsible

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youths under the rod of the teacher—all of this, on the face of it, is very different from the gospel-picture of Jesus. On the other hand, it would be equally one-sided to deny that Essenism was of importance as a preparation for Christianity. Not alone the rites of purification were emphasized by the Essenes; of more importance to them was the heart free from selfishness and sensuality. If they were indifferent to the political fate of the nation as a whole, they were intense in their sympathies, ample in their generosity toward the destitute, lonely and lowly, caring for the needs of the lower classes, the impoverished and the ailing. To practice benevolence and to be pure, these were the fundamental commands of Essenism long before they became fundamental commands of Christianity. I know of no instance in the ancient world, heathen or Jewish, which approaches Christianity herein more nearly than Essenism.

When we recall that the Essenes had settlements and monasteries in every town and village, that the narrow circle of the Order was widened by the greater circle of the married lay brothers associated with them, that they devoted themselves to the education of other peoples' children, that in their capacity as soothsayers and physicians they came in contact with all conditions and classes of people,—then we will conceive readily that the Essene spirit was influential far beyond the narrow limits of the Order itself. We will find it more than likely that retiring

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men, who were repelled by the officious and shallow Pharisaic commerce with piety, would have a sympathetic understanding of the more serious and soulful piety of the Essenes, and that for such men the thought was not remote, the preparation for the coming of God's dominion, the salvation of His people lies in an inner conversion and in a purification of hearts.

Such a man, related to Essenism and yet not belonging to that Order, was John the Baptist; as a preacher of repentance he appeared in the wilderness of Juda, in which most of the Essene settlements were located. He was not a forerunner in the sense that he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and pointed to him as his greater successor; this was the later interpretation which the Christian congregation applied to the relation between them. But John was a forerunner of Jesus in the sense that his was the first announcement to the masses of the near approach of the kingdom of heaven as a call to repentance; thus he created that strong movement which prepared the soil for the life-work of Jesus. With the old Prophets, John the Baptist was convinced that the decisive "day of the Lord" would bring salvation only to those who prepared themselves in worthy fashion by an honest change of spirit; for the others, though their trust in the kinship with Abraham be ever so great, it would be a day of judgment and of terror. Baptism, or the immersion in flowing water, was to be the sign of

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the repentant, and at the same time the mystical medium of cleansing from sin and guilt, a means toward the forgiveness of sin. As daily baths were considered by the Essenes the symbol and means of religious purification and holiness for the members of the Order, so the baptism of John was to be effective for all who sought salvation; by baptism all would be sanctified into one holy congregation of the people worthy of God's kingdom. The Essene ideal of personal purity of heart and of life was elevated by John; he made it the duty of all. According to the fulfillment of that duty the approaching catastrophe of the kingdom of God would bring salvation or misery to each individual. The idea of the messianic nation was the background and driving power of this popular religious movement; that it was the true cause of the imprisonment and execution of the Baptist may be gleaned from the reference of Josephus, which is certainly historical.

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JESUS

ONE of the host which came to John to be baptized by him was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and Mary; they had four other sons and several daughters. We have no historical knowledge of the childhood and youth of Jesus, for the narratives in Matthew and Luke are religious legends of no historical value; we will explain their origin in a later connection. In Mark the oldest Gospel, Jesus appears for the first time at the baptism by John. Therewith, the Gospels associate the miraculous event of the messianic sanctification of Jesus by a celestial voice and the descent of the spirit in the shape of a dove; since this, too, is self-evidently not history but legend—later we will recognize it as one of the first steps in the development of the Christ-speculations of the Christian congregation—the question has been raised whether there is any historical remainder to the story of the baptism, after the miraculous part has been subtracted? Though there is no certain knowledge possible, yet it may be considered probable that Jesus was baptized by John; if that had not been a settled fact in the memory of the congregation, they would scarcely have told the story that John baptized Jesus and thereby make it apppear that the

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latter was subordinate to the Baptist; the evident attempt of the Evangelists to weaken this natural suspicion speaks for the correctness of the tradition of the baptism of Jesus by John.

From the fact that, after the imprisonment of the Baptist, Jesus appears with the same cry: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven (that is God) is at hand," we conclude that John's preaching concerning the immediate dawn of the dominion of God and the great judgment day made a deep and lasting impression on Jesus. It sounds as though he simply meant to continue the Baptist's work. Yet it was another spirit which spoke through him, a new power it was, that vitalized his activity. John had been a preacher of repentance who wished to terrify and humble the sinful masses and their overweening leaders in Judaea; his stern ascetic appearance and the habitation in the wilderness harmonized with his task. But an ascetic is no enthusiast, and a penitential sermon does not beget inspiration; hence, it is easy to see why there are no stories of miraculous deeds performed by John, and why his personality did not become the centre of any miraculous legends such as usually express the enthusiastic admiration whenever a powerful personality wins the hearts and inflames the imagination of the masses.

Jesus was such a personality. He inspired others because he himself was inspired by a faith, more elevating than humiliating, bringing bliss more than

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terror. He won the hearts of many, because he brought them a great heart, rich in love and in mercy. His sermon was not the old, dry-as-dust wisdom of the scribes, not the elaboration of lean, intricate questions of Law, nor was it the threatening or damning sermon of judgment. It was the immediate expression of his own heart, firm in faith and warm with love, and therefore his words became the joyous message of salvation for all the enslaved and oppressed, the weary and the heavy-laden. Whoever heard and saw him, got the impression that something new had appeared, a teacher different from the law-learned, a teacher by the grace of God, in whom a higher power was at work,—a divine spirit so the faithful felt; a demonic spirit, blasphemed their opponents—in any event, a power wonderful in capturing hearts, banishing demons and healing diseased bodies.

The mystery of such personality can never be revealed entirely; in this case no more than in that of any other hero of human kind; but in some measure it may be possible to attempt to explain their peculiarity by the conditions of the time and the environment. The teachings of the Baptist had weakened the conviction in Jesus that the great, long-prophesied day of the Lord was at hand; the Baptist had announced to the Judaeans who were harping on the kinship of Abraham and to their self-lauding, hypocritical guardians of Zion that it would be pre-eminently a day of judgment; such

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teachings were pertinent in Judaea and conceivable in the mouth of John, the priest's son, who had been a constant eyewitness to the hierarchical confusion. But Jesus was a child of the people and had been born in Galilee where the population was freer from Jewish national pride and Pharisaical deification of the Law than in Judaea, and where men felt more inconsolable over the distress of the times:—the tyranny of the Idumaean princes nominated and supported by the Romans, the fearful pressure of taxes, the wilfulness of the aristocracy, the poor man's lack of rights, the economical disintegration and the religious disorder of the masses. Such was the state of social distress at home that met Jesus' eye on his return to Galilee from the wilderness of Judaea, and on his lips were sermons of the approaching kingdom of God. How could he bear to use the threatening language of the judgment sermon toward these poorest of men? The Gospel of Matthew tells (9, 36): "But when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." With the eye of compassionate love, he saw in this maltreated and leaderless mass the glowing spark of pious hope and the longing for salvation, consolation, help and guidance. In his soul, he felt the words of the old Prophet: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people!" He felt that the prophetic spirit had taken hold of him and that the Lord had anointed him "to

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preach good tidings unto the poor," and sent him " to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Isaiah 40, 1; 61, 1. Cp. Luke 4, 17 seq.) In his sympathizing heart, the distress of the people became a call of God, a certain proof of his mission to preach good tidings to the poor. This mission called for a new method of work; he could not separate himself proudly like the Pharisee from the unclean and sinful populace; nor could he retire into the wilderness as John did, waiting for the people to come to him. No, he sought men everywhere. He looked for them in the schools on Sabbath and at their work on the week days; he entered the houses of those who admitted him; he sat by the bedside of the sick desirous of his help and sat at the same hospitable table with notorious publicans. This love which approached its object, seeking the lost and saving them, was something new; not among the haughty models of piety, the Pharisees, nor among the shrinking ascetics of the Essene Order could this love be found, nor had John the bitter preacher of repentance possessed it. It was a revival of the best spirit of the Prophets Hosea, Jeremiah and the second Isaiah; yet, differing from their spirit, because another period furnished the background, a period of feverish tension in which the despair of the old and the expectation of an all-subversive

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catastrophe had reached its climax and shaken the people to their depths. The glowing hope of the early appearance of God's miraculous deeds of salvation was allied in Jesus' soul with the merciful love of the lowly, the miserable and the sinful, and thereupon rested the charm of his personality, the enthusiastic and the heroic as well as the delicate and the mild elements of his appearance and activity, his irresistible power over the masses as well as his power to attract and hold individual souls; thereupon, too, the collision with the ruling powers of his nation and the world: in short, thereupon rested the success of his life—and its tragedy.

That cry with which Jesus' sermon begins according to the Evangelist: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," that cry is at the same time the essence of all his teaching. The prophetic proclamation of the nearness of God's kingdom is the dominant note from beginning to end, the motive of the demand for moral transformation. What did Jesus mean by God's kingdom, the "kingdom of heaven"? The customary opinion is that he understood it to be something entirely new and different from what his countrymen thought, whether their idea was a kingdom in heaven above, a future bliss of souls, or even a spiritual constitution of men, their true piety and righteousness. But if Jesus had actually united such a new thought with the old term, would we not be justified in expecting him to express himself clearly and decidedly

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concerning it from the beginning, that he would explain his meaning accurately and prevent misunderstanding? But we find no such report; as the Baptist before him had done, he took it for granted that every man knew what he meant by the kingdom whose near approach he offered as a prospect. Did he not mean, then, just what was meant by all the Jews of his period, namely, that wonderful exertion of God's ruling power* hoped for by all the pious since Daniel, whereby present miserable conditions would be swept away and yield to a new and better order of things on earth, especially in the Jewish nation?

In fact this suspicion is confirmed by an unbiassed consideration of Jesus' expressions on the subject. Above all, the beatitudes in their original form as handed down in Luke (6, 20 seq.) must be considered: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." It is clearly declared here that the approaching kingdom of God means a new arrangement of social conditions favorable to the poor and unfavorable to the rich; at the same time,

* The Greek word *basileia* means royal rule, government of God, and the connotation includes the state of happiness produced for the pious as the result and appearance of the divine dominion.

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this presupposes that the poor are the pious whose hope is in God, and the rich are the godless and outrageous worldings, thus using the words in the same sense as in Psalms.

This clear meaning of the original beatitudes in Luke was made unclear by Matthew (5, 3 seq.) under the viewpoint of later historical circumstances; the poor, in the literal sense, became "the poor in spirit," and the physically hungry became those "hungering for righteousness," thus crowding the original contrast between the present and the future condition out of sight to bring out the opposition of external condition and internal value; though even in this case the prophecy that the meek shall inherit the earth betrays clearly enough the original sense of an expected rearrangement of earthly conditions in the future. Is it possible to miss that meaning in Jesus' consolatory word to his friends: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?" (Luke 12, 32.) The same prophecy is repeated more fully at the Last Supper thus: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22, 29; Matthew 19, 28.) There, too, is the noteworthy saying: "I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come," or "until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom

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of God." (Luke 22, 18; Mark 14, 25.) With difficulty could such expressions lead one to think of aught else but a new condition of the Jewish people brought about by divine omnipotence in favor of Jesus and his followers, but the new epoch was not to be thought of as so different from the present that there would be no eating and drinking: to read future heavenly bliss into these words would be violence forbidden by historical methods.

Let us add the request of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come!" and ask, *not* what *we* mean by it, but what thought did these words cause in the minds of the disciples of Jesus? In the Acts of the Apostles (1, 6) there is an undoubted guide to the answer, for there the disciples are made to ask the departing Master: "Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The realization of the prophesied messianic kingdom in the Jewish people was the pivotal point of the hopes and the questionings of the earliest Christian congregation; would that have been possible, if Jesus himself had not taught something of that kind or something opposed to it?

The proof adduced from these expressions without ambiguity cannot be eliminated by the semblance of opposition through other passages liable to various interpretations. In the parables of the sower and the seed, an attempt has been made to find the thought that the kingdom of God is present in the moral attitude of the faithful and develops

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by reason of their own activity; but they mean rather that the coming of the kingdom may be prepared by the preaching of the Word, but its actual appearance cannot be hastened or brought about by any human action; it must be awaited with patience until it comes into being of itself according to God's will. The parables of the treasure in the field and the priceless pearl simply mean that for the superabundant good of participation in God's kingdom, one must be ready to give up all other good; but they do not tell us that the highest good is a present spiritual possession; clearly, it is described as the rich reward to be hoped for in some future epoch, and the manifold recompense for present sacrifices. (Matt. 19, 29.) The only passage which seems to indicate the spiritual presence of the kingdom is that of Luke (17, 20 seq.): "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." But how uncertain, aye, impossible is this traditional interpretation, as soon as the whole connection is considered: could Jesus have said to the Pharisees, the kingdom of God is within them? and could he have said that it will come without disturbance, when the description immediately following makes its coming a sudden and universally recognizable catastrophe, comparing it to the lightning which fills the heavens with sudden flame or to the flood which swept suddenly over the secure contemporaries of Noah, or

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to the downpour of fire and brimstone which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha? Inasmuch as this view appears in other Gospel passages, and corresponds exactly to the apocalyptic expectations of contemporary Judaism, we are certainly justified in holding it to be the actual opinion of Jesus.*

Jesus thought of the coming of God's kingdom not only as a sudden but an impending catastrophe; before his generation had died or even before the completion of the missionary work in the cities of Israel, the great event was to take place according to Mark 9, 1; Matthew 16, 28; 10, 23. In those last days at Jerusalem, Jesus seems to have expected the decisive turn of events in the immediate future. Whoever is able to think historically, will not find fault with the fact that he was mistaken. Like all heroes, Jesus was a child of his nation and his era and shared their messianic expectations; it was this which made him able to do the reformatory work of his time. The firm faith in the proximity of the decisive turn was the impulse and telling power of his activity; inasmuch as the highest ideal filling

* Luke's saying (17, 20 seq.) is taken by that Evangelist from the Pauline spiritualization of the kingdom idea (Romans 14, 17) and put into the mouth of Jesus in this passage so as to limit or correct the catastrophic notion of the miraculous dawn of the kingdom as given in the oldest tradition. In the same way the Evangelist has inserted the traditional word about the validity of the Law (Luke 16, 17) between two other sayings which are of such nature as to break its force. This method of adding new interpretations to the tradition which render the latter harmless, was usual in early Christianity, where tradition had not yet crystallized into a canonized text.

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his soul was an impending, immediate reality, it lifted him above the petty cares and interests of earthly life and caused him to recognize the unconditional surrender of the whole heart and life to the will of the only good God as the true destiny of man. This kernel of his faith remains the model for all time; it preserves a truth for us, even though history itself has led us to differentiate between the permanent kernel and the temporary form, to recognize the realization of the divine will, no longer in miraculous catastrophes, but in the continuous education of humanity through the natural evolution of social life. Nevertheless, the acknowledgment of the absolute value of the kingdom of God always preserves its force, the absolute duty of each individual to surrender himself to this eternal object of the universe, rises superior to all finite and particular objects, and there remains the grave responsibility of each one for his own conduct in respect to this highest purpose of life.

The teachings of Jesus foreshadow this ethical individualistic turn of the ideas of messianic kingdom and judgment. For, despite his close adherence to the prevailing Jewish pictures of the future, he did depart from them at one important point. In the words of Jesus, there is no mention of the victory of the Jewish nation over the heathen and the revenge on these enemies, which had been for the others, especially the Pharisees, the most important matter in the messianic period of salvation.

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Whenever he speaks of judgment to come, he never treats of the punishment of the heathen nations, but always of the verdict concerning the fate of the individual. The moral earning of each individual life is then to appear: the quiet piety of the secluded chamber and the quiet unostentatious benefactions the Father in Heaven will reward in public; the loyal servant will enter into the joy of the master; but the proud and certain sinners, the merciless who cannot forgive and say 'Lord, Lord,' but did not do God's will—they will be excluded from the community of the blessed and consigned to extremest darkness or hell. The judgment will separate the wheat from the tares, good from foul fish, by according to each the fate which he deserves.

With this thought of judgment, the idea of reward is inextricably bound up. It is often employed as a motive for sacrifice and benevolence or a consolation for the suffering and persecuted. The sayings about the recompense for fasts and prayers (Matthew 6, 4; 6, 18) especially are so close to the Jewish notion of the merit of that kind of "good works," that one might feel tempted to dispute their authenticity. So much the more noteworthy that while the idea of reward has been preserved, yet it has been ennobled by elevating it beyond the legal to the moral judgment of actions. According to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, wherein all receive like wages irrespective of the amount of

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work, wages can no longer be considered legal recompense, but recompense becomes a free gift of grace granted to all who follow the divine call. Luke (17, 7 seq.) gives man no more legal claim to reward before God than the servant who has simply done his duty. At the same time, a rich reward is promised to the loyal servant: The Lord himself will serve him (Luke 12, 37) or he will be set over many (Matthew 25, 21), which means that the field of his activity will be broadened according to the measure of thoroughness displayed. This thought, that social standing depends on the extent of accomplishment, contains an incontestable truth. In principle, this puts an end to the motive of reward in the sense of mere utilitarian ethics, for the highest norm of morality is recognized in the perfect goodness of God as the father and the highest motive in the love of God and fellowmen.

The old notion that the designation of God as "father" was entirely new with Jesus and was based on miraculous revelation, is not entirely correct. For the historical mind, this absolute miracle resolves itself into an evolution, which may be comprehended psychologically. In the earliest stages of religion, the deity is named father, in the physical sense; thus Homer calls Zeus the father of the gods and men. In a higher sense, Plato calls God the Father of the universe, who in his unenvying goodness desired that all should be as much like him as possible; hence, it is man's task

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to become most like God through righteousness and piety. Seneca, too, spoke of God's fatherly attitude, by which he educated men to virtue; he called the unlimited benevolence which made evil-doing on their part impossible, the nature of the gods, and said that true worship consisted in imitating them; "would you imitate the gods, give to the ingrate, for the sun rises upon the godless and the rain falls on the fields." In the Israelitish religion, God was the father of Israel from of old; the Israelites were his sons and the relation of father and son in the post-exilic wisdom-books is applied not only to the nation as a whole, but also to each pious individual. Sirach calls God "Father and Lord of my life"; in the Wisdom of Solomon and in the Psalms of Solomon, the pious are "God's sons," and Philo speaks of the "Heavenly Father" who sends the divine powers down into the soul as into his temple, to purify and to sanctify it. From the Rabbinic writings, we gather that, at the time of Jesus, the expression "Heavenly Father," "our Father in Heaven," had become a popular substitute for the old name of God which had fallen into disuse. It cannot be said that Jesus taught a new God as though he had set up God the loving father as against the righteous God of the Jews: the Jews, too, knew the merciful God and the father in Heaven. Again, for Jesus, too, the fundamental conviction remains that the almighty and holy God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the only good God,

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was infinitely removed beyond all bodily weakness and human sin, that he is the King who demands a reckoning of his servants, that he is the Judge, more to be feared than men because he has the power not only to kill the body, but to destroy both body and soul in hell. But we must not forget that in religions dogmatic thoughts are not exhaustive, but there are emotions and powers of instinct which they conjure up in the soul, and these differ with the peculiarity of individual natures: the various ways in which the idea of God reacts on the individual's emotions naturally act again on the idea of God, in such manner that the side to which the emotions respond most markedly, moves into the foreground and predominates over the other aspects. Hence the well-known saying, "As the man, so his God." This universal experience will lead us to a psychological conception of the peculiarity of Jesus' consciousness of God, without resorting to miracles.

Though the father-title of God was not strange to the Jews of Jesus' time, yet the trust in God's paternal attitude could never be of all-pervading and regulating importance, because, to the great majority, God was still pre-eminently the heavenly king of the Jewish nation; that is, the religious consciousness was still nationally and legally bound, governed by the slave spirit of fear and disturbed by the hatred of the heathen as well as of the unclean compatriot. In Jesus' soul, however, there was

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neither fear nor hatred, but merciful love suffused it, that love, which was drawn most strongly to those who needed help, and therefore did not shrink with pride from the direct misery of sin and guilt, but sought to heal it and dared to conquer it. Because Jesus felt this merciful love as the strongest and best within himself, he could not do other than think it the highest in God, the fundamental quality of the divine Being to which his power and his righteousness were subordinate. Thus God became for him omnipotence of love,—a father in whom benevolence is not only a quality alongside of others, but is his innermost nature, whose goodness is inexhaustible in giving and ceaseless in forgiving, whose sun shines upon the wicked as upon the good, and whose rain descends alike upon the righteous and the unrighteous. In nature, Jesus sees the revelation of the providential power and goodness of the Creator: against his will, no sparrow falls from the house-top, no hair from our head; he clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air. How much the more may man depend on his providential care,—that man, whose soul has greater value than all the rest of the world, who is not only God's creature, but his child, whose destiny it is to become his image in moral perfection, in purity of heart and compassion. Thus the divine and the human ideals become allied for Jesus: willing the good which he felt to be the highest and the strongest in himself becomes the summit of all reality, the world-govern-

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ing power and therewith the prototype, the binding Law and the greatest good for all men.

With this ideal estimate of men, however, Jesus combines the sober view and keen judgment of actual experience. Men are *to become* God's children by their increasing moral likeness to God; by nature they are not really that which they are destined to be, having little resemblance to their model. "No one is good save God alone," and all men must pray "forgive our sins!" The verdict upon all of them (Luke 11, 13) is that they are "evil," for (Mark 7, 21 seq.) in the hearts of all of them lurk "evil thoughts" of sensual and selfish desires expressing themselves through words and deeds, which make man unclean. Jesus did not see evil only in action contrary to law as the Jews did, and not as the Greeks in material corporeity, conditioning our existence on earth, but in the unclean and selfish inclinations of the heart which conflict with our ideal being, and destroy body and soul. Hence the command: remove the eye and the hand which would tempt thee to evil, so that thy whole body be not thrown into hell! This destructive power of evil appears to Jesus in the idea of the devil and his demonic host; he did not, as is often said, merely accommodate himself to a popular notion, but he shared it in all seriousness; it is one of the pieces of his world-picture which shows him to be a child of his period, but which has no authority for us. The devil as the personified existence of evil belongs

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to Oriental dualism which cannot harmonize logically with ethical monotheism, the rulership of one good God. That Jesus held *theoretically* to this contradiction must not surprise us in a prophet who did not reflect philosophically concerning God and the world; but what is more important and necessary for religion, he surmounted the obstacle *practically,* for he dissipated the fear of devils, which rested heavily upon men then by the power of his trust in God and his love of men. In this connection, his cure of the sick assumes an importance not to be underestimated. We will be less inclined to doubt that they have a historical basis when we recall that similar events happen still; certain sicknesses, particularly those caused by disturbances of the nervous system, such as paralysis, are temporarily and even permanently cured by the spiritual influence of suggestion on the soul life of the patient. Similarly, we will have to think that through the suggestive influence of Jesus' personality, faith was wakened and new life-powers released in those patients whom they considered "possessed"; such miraculous successes seemed to Jesus as well as those around him the victory of a superior spirit over the demonic spirits in the patients, as they actually were the victory of his faith and his love over the misery and sin of men. They were, therefore, tangible proof to him that Satan's power was broken and the kingdom of God come. (Matthew 12, 28.) With that same confidence of a trusting love which enabled him to

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heal sick bodies, he knew that he was justified in lifting guilt-laden, repentant souls by the consolatory word of the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 2, 10 seq.) Though his condemnation of sin was severe, yet was his sympathy equally strong for such sinners who were suffering under their guilt and were sighing for relief from their bonds, longing for a new and purer life.

In such suffering of repentance and longing for rescue, he spied the glimmering spark of the good beneath the ashes of a lost life; by unloving hardness, he knew that the spark would be extinguished, while a sympathetic human love, arousing the trust in God's forgiving and renewing grace, would fan it into flame. In the parable of the lost son, Jesus tells of sin and salvation in most straightforward fashion; how sin bears its punishment within itself, by rendering man most unhappy; how this feeling of misery engenders the longing for salvation, the homesickness for the lost paternal roof, and finally the decision to turn about and return home; how the love of the father goes out to the repentant who returns and freely forgives all guilt without demanding repentance or satisfaction and admits the sinner into a new life close to his own. These are the essential truths of the religion of salvation, which Jesus believed and preached, because his own merciful love of the sinful and the suffering was the guarantee of a similar attitude of his heavenly father.

Since the natural inclination of all men, even

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though they have not given themselves to the life of crude sin, is not as good and as pure as that of a child of God and a subject of God's kingdom ought to be, therefore the demand is addressed to all without exception: "Repent ye!" Instead of self-love expressing itself in impure and selfish desires of every kind there should appear the love of God with the whole heart and the love of neighbors as ourselves. (Mark 12, 28 seq.) According to Deuteronomy (6, 5), love of God with the whole heart is a fundamental demand of the monotheistic belief in God, and Leviticus (19, 18) commands the love of compatriots as ourselves. Hillel, the Pharisaic teacher, had broadened this command to include the love of all men and considered that command the essence of the Law. Here, too, it must be said that the content of this double command was not actually new with Jesus, but the manner with which he applied it seriously to practice was. In Judaism, this view of Hillel could not force its way because the teachers themselves, much less the others, could not free themselves of the fundamental error of legal religion and ethics,—the breaking up of the divine will into a number of positive commands and particularly prohibitions (the Pharisees counted 613 such), all of equal force because supposedly commanded by God; and among these, the ritual regulations were at least equally as important, in fact, more important than the moral commands. For this reason, religion and morality in Judaism had degen-

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erated to that rigidity and externalization which had begun in Phariseeism and culminated in Talmudism. Jesus broke this bond by tracing morality back to the inner attitude of the heart and taught a proper understanding of the free employment of the one fundamental instinct, the love of God and of man. The slavish obedience to an external was thus superseded and the freedom of the moral personality placed in its stead; that freedom is not egoistic license, for it feels itself bound to God's divine will, not by slavish fear, but by childlike love. Therewith the moral was recognized, not only in its essential unity as the self-activity and development of the good will, but ethics and religion were united into an irreducible unity. Just as everything moral should be rooted in the love of God, so should all religion find employment in the love of man. A new estimate of ceremonial activity was thus created; no longer as in the ancient heathen and Jewish world is it a service to be performed for God by which some credit with God is won, or God's favor bought, but it is a natural expression of the pious attitude and has only so much value as the external corresponds with the internal: where the inner attitude is missing, there all fasts and prayers are a semblance without value, empty hypocrisy. (Matthew 6, 1 seq.) From this viewpoint, the Sabbath observance is no longer a service which must be performed because God once commanded it, but it is a gift of God for the welfare of men (Mark 2, 28); hence

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the observance most worthy of such a day is service for the benefit of our fellowmen (Mark 3, 4; Luke 6, 9). For this reason, ceremonial performances must never be accounted greater than the performance of plain moral duties. Jesus says with Hosea: "Mercy and not sacrifice, I ask!" and he condemns most sternly the Pharisaic practice which valued a pious charity more highly than the performance of filial duties and employed public prayer as a means of satisfying vanity and greed; on the contrary, he would even have the sacrificial rite interrupted so as not to delay the conciliation of an angry brother. (Matthew 5, 23.)

Much as Jesus was conscious that this internalization of the moral was the teaching of a "better righteousness" than that of the scribes and the Pharisees, *yet he was far removed from the declaration that the Jewish Law was done away with.* According to several sayings, the authenticity of which we are scarcely justified in doubting, he taught the absolute, continuous validity of the Law in all its parts down to the last jot and tittle, and he urged his disciples to follow, not the works but the teachings of the scribes, though they were not to set the moral aside for the sake of the ritual in the Law, yet they were to perform the latter and not omit the former. (Matthew 5, 17 seq.; 23, 3; 23, 23; Luke 16, 17.) With all the piety of a pious Jew, Jesus felt himself subservient and attached to the Law, without consciousness of the fact that in principle his interpre-

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tation of morality actually had moved beyond the standpoint of the Law. He did not mean to abrogate the Law, but to fulfill it, and to bring its true meaning into force by opposing the distorted interpretation of the Jewish school tenets. But in this struggle, he was made to utter occasional expressions, whose real extent, unconsciously perhaps, not only included the negation of the mere school tenets but of the Law itself. Thus, when asked why his disciples did not fast, he spoke the important word about the undressed cloth which was of no use for an old garment and the new wine which would burst the old wine-skins (Mark 2, 21); in effect, these utterances tell of the impossibility of harmonizing the new form of piety with the old life under the Law. Or when he says (Mark 2, 28) that the Sabbath is here for the sake of man and the Son of man (meaning man generally) is lord even of the Sabbath, then the relativity of the Sabbath law as against the moral purpose of man himself is uttered in such form that the absolute validity of the ritual law seems seriously questioned. During the dispute about washings, the principle is set up that "there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him," only the wicked thoughts which go out from his heart are defiling (Mark 7, 8 seq.); wherewith the Mosaic laws concerning cleansing and food are robbed of all value. Jesus bases his absolute rejection of divorce on the original intention of the Creator, and declares the opposing

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statute of Mosaic Law to be the lawmaker's concession to the weakness and hard-heartedness of men. If the passage about the destruction of "the temple that is made with hands" and the construction of another made without hands was actually spoken by Jesus (according to Mark 14, 58; 15, 29, it was ascribed to him by "false witnesses"), then it could mean scarcely anything else than the hope of the near end of the legal temple service and in its stead the inauguration of a more spiritual service of God. When we compare these passages, which are beyond and contrary to the Law, with those explanations of a conservative tendency, it seems to me that we get the impression that Jesus was freer from the Mosaic law within himself than he was conscious of being, and that he did not sense the contradiction between inner freedom and external hold, because the moral was of such great importance that the mere ceremonial might remain alongside as an undisturbed subsidiary. Only in such cases, where the moral was endangered by the ceremonial, did he oppose it so freely that it gives us a glimpse of a possible future abrogation of the Law. From this standpoint to that of a conscious breach with the Law was a long step which Jesus himself never made. This is one of the points where it is especially noticeable, that the *germ* of the new religion was present in the attitude of Jesus, but enveloped in the traditional forms of his nation and his day; the release of this germ and the realization of its independence

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was a development which remained for the apostolic congregation.

A consideration of the ascetic side of Jesus' ethics, its rigorous demand for the abandonment of the present world and its social benefits, gives us a similar impression of bias resulting from environment. This ascetic side to an ethics of love has always been found paradoxical, and attempts have been made to weaken it by rationalization or to explain it away by allegorization. Sometimes it has been romantically lauded as heroic idealism; elevated so far beyond human weakness that we can only admire and never attain it; this interpretation, logically followed out, must needs lead to the Catholic dogma of a double morality. Our purely historical method needs neither rationalistic nor romantic fictions, inasmuch as it sees in the ascetic rigorism of the ethics of Jesus the inevitable practical complement and consequence of his apocalyptic expectation of the impending catastrophe, ending the present and ushering in the new world. The characteristic individuality of the actual Jesus of history cannot be understood, if this condition imposed by the history of the time on his entire mode of thinking, including its moral side, is disregarded. While it must be conceded that ascetic rigorism is closely related to ethical idealism, yet they differ in this: ideal requirements do not contradict given conditions of human society; despite their sublimity, they are capable of fulfillment; but

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ascetic, rigoristic demands include a radical negation of the historical life of human society. If Jesus commands that we should love our enemies, that is, not revengefully requiting evil by evil, but conciliating and conquering the evil by good, we will be compelled to regard this command (taught, too, by other wise men, as Plato, Buddha, Seneca, Epictetus) as a sublime duty, difficult but not impossible of fulfillment because it does not run counter in any way to the order of human society. But when Jesus adds: "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matthew 5, 39; Luke 6, 29), one cannot honestly deny that such a command cannot be carried out in any society because it abrogates all law and gives an easy victory to brute force. Only the temper of the times furnishes the explanation,—times when the world was about to crumble and all social values were doomed to destruction in the great judgment conflagration; only under such circumstances did it seem fitting to secure the glory of the coming world by complete abnegation of personal rights and by total indifference to honor and shame in the disintegrating world.

The same holds of all the sayings of Jesus in which he requires of his disciples a complete separation from all that binds them to this world, above all from property, and even from family ties. The story of the rich young man is well known; he asks

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what to do in order to participate in the eternal life, and the answer is a command to sell all his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor; by obedience he will have acquired a treasure in heaven. That this was not an exceptional case, but was intended to stand for a general principle, is clearly indicated by the remark which Jesus adds: it is a greater impossibility for a rich man to enter into heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle—such an impossibility that a miracle alone could accomplish it. Apparently Jesus judged wealth in itself to be pernicious,—the greatest insuperable danger for the soul of its owner, an idol ("Mammon") which holds man so completely in his service that he cannot possibly serve God at the same time; hence the universal nature of the requirement that this soul-destroying ballast be thrown overboard so that the safe harbor of God's kingdom be made in the company of the poor. "Sell that ye have and give alms; make for yourself purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. So therefore whosoever be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple!" (Luke 12, 33; 14, 33.) It is customary to interpret these and similar passages spiritually, in the sense that one should not be greedy or selfish and cling to wealth with the whole heart, but as for the rest, wealth is permitted and should be employed for good and reasonable purposes; that is the way in which *we,* the cultured of to-day, think, because

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we consider wealth like all other earthly things a means to moral activity and because we would consider surrender of private property, the surrender of the inalienable possession of personal independence of the individual in society. But Jesus thought like a child of his time in this matter and those thoughts differ radically from ours: wealth was solely a means of buying pleasures and the wealthy were the easy-going worldlings who oppressed the poor and despised the kingdom of God, so he thought; and, above all, he was convinced that he was about to face the miraculous catastrophe which should put an end to all existing things and make all things new. Would it have been worth while making rules for the further maintenance of society? This viewpoint explains those harsh words in which Jesus demands the ruthless sundering of family ties: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 9, 60; 14, 26.) How strange such words sound in the mouth of a teacher who had made love the cardinal virtue, who regarded the sanctity of marriage so highly that he rejected all possibility of separation, who had ranked filial duties above ceremonial works in divine service, who had frequently evinced his own warm love of children! But we must never forget, that

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two souls dwelt in his breast: beside the hearty and heart-winning love for the individuals who trustfully approached him, there glowed in him the enthusiasm of the prophet of God's kingdom. As such prophet, his present world was ripe for destruction, and therefore whatever bound man to the world, family no less than wealth and property, was but a hindrance, heroically to be surmounted for the sake of participation in the life of the coming world. This alone explains why Jesus gave no instructions concerning the social duties of husband and wife, parents and children, work in the profession, and life in the state. The well-known passage (Mark 12, 17) "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," does not mean that political duties are to be based on religion but rather intends to separate political matters from religion so completely that they become as indifferent to the pious as all other earthly cares. This complete disregard of all that goes to make up the content of social ethics cannot be explained, as some think, by saying that Jesus desired to submit the arrangement of these things to the natural development of the congregation; such reasoning forgets that Jesus saw no prospect of "natural development" but expected a supernatural and sudden catastrophe making all things new at once.

Since history itself has swept away this expectation for us, it is clear that the ascetic rigorous de-

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mands of Jesus' ethics which rested upon it, cannot be valid for us in the original literal sense. I hold that it is far more expedient to concede this without reserve than to torture those bold expressions with the doubtful arts of interpretation or to edge away from them with a bad conscience. The more clearly we define for ourselves the difference between the ethics of Jesus conditioned by his time and environment and modern social ethics, the more decidedly must we bring to light the permanent kernel of truth hidden in that temporary shell. This kernel may be found in two sayings of Jesus which sum it up: "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Matthew 16, 25 seq.) and "But whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." (Mark 10, 43.) The first means that true salvation, the fulfillment of the life-purpose of the individual, depends upon a self-denying, unreserved surrender to the highest purpose of all, the realization of the divine will, of which Jesus knew himself to be the tool. The other means that the social value of each depends upon the measure of his service to the whole of society. Both reject that egoism which seeks its own object and in the selfish gain of temporal possessions loses its eternal object; both promise the richest life-content and permanent

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satisfaction to that self-forgetting love which seeks the fulfillment of God's will in the service of human society. "Die and become!"—this is indeed an ethical truth for all time; a new order of society was formed in the Christian congregation for all time by this principle, and according to its norm it ought to and will become purer as time goes on. In the end, the difference is merely this: for us, the divine will no longer reveals itself in supernatural catastrophes but in the natural development of human society, hence our surrender to the divine will urges us, not to a breach with society but to the positive, moral employment and refinement of its historical life conditions.

We have reviewed the teachings of Jesus—his joyous message of the coming kingdom of God, of the fatherhood of God, and of the true righteousness of man as God's child. The question remains: what did Jesus think about himself, his mission and his position in God's kingdom? The historical answer to this question is made peculiarly difficult because throughout the Gospels the transformed ideas of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, which either arose later in the faith of the congregation or were colored by that faith, were transferred back into the earthly life of Jesus and the corresponding sayings were put into his mouth; naturally, this did not take place without manifold contradictions with their own traditional recollections of the actual historical course of events.

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According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus is the incarnate appearance of the Logos or the Son of God, who was with God from the beginning, who was himself a God, and the disciples beheld his divine glory even under the earthly cloak of the person Jesus. (John 1, 14.) According to Luke and Matthew, Jesus is the supernaturally-begotten Son of God, who was hailed as the world redemeer by divine spirits at birth; and even Mark, though he knows nothing about the supernatural birth, has a celestial voice proclaim at his baptism that Jesus is the Son of God and the chosen object of His love, or its equivalent, the Messiah; then the demons of the possessed acknowledge him as such, and many miracles, chiefly the transfiguration, confirm it. All of this belongs to the realm of pious legend; later on, its origin in the belief of the congregation will be explained. From a purely historical standpoint, so much is certain that Jesus was not conscious of any superhuman origin or nature. He appeared as a prophet, just as the Baptist had before him; he worked as a teacher and healer among his own people, like other predecessors and contemporaries. His power over sick souls and bodies, miraculous as it might seem, was not an absolute, divine omnipotence, but conditioned by the faith of the sick, as appears in the report of Mark (6, 5), which says that he could "do no mighty work" in Nazareth because of the unbelief of his townsmen. Neither was his prophetic knowledge unlimited; the son

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knows not that hour when the promised time of salvation shall begin, the father alone knows (Mark 13, 32). In noble humility, Jesus even refuses to consider himself morally perfect; when one addressed him "good Master," he answered: "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God." (Mark 10, 18.) Therewith he placed himself in a category with other men; he prayed to God as to a father, just as he had taught the disciples to pray, "our father"; he felt himself to be the Son of God in no other than the moral-religious sense, according to which he called upon us to become sons of God by making ourselves like our heavenly father; he termed the peaceable, "Sons of God," and all who do God's will, his brothers and sisters. (Mark 3, 35.) Even in such passages where the name "Son of God" is applied to Jesus in a unique sense, as by the celestial voice at the baptism and the transfiguration, by the devil at the temptation, by the high priest at the trial, there the words in the older Gospels are but another way of saying "Messiah" and do not include any transcendental or metaphysical meaning.

On the strength of the older Gospels, the truly human self-consciousness of Jesus may be declared without doubt an established historical fact. It is far more difficult to answer the question whether Jesus assumed the messianic dignity and if so, how? In any event, that he did not do so from the beginning, may be concluded with great probability from the report testified to by the first three Gospels that

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at the close of his activity in Galilee on a journey in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do men say that I am?" Whereupon they answered: the (resurrected) John the Baptist, or Elijah or some other prophet. Then Jesus asked them: "But who say ye that I am?" Whereupon Peter is made to answer: "Thou art the Christ." (Mark 8, 29; in Luke "God's Christ"; in Matthew "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.") Here the reader of the Gospels who thinks historically faces this alternative: either the many messianic expressions of Jesus and avowals of those about him reported earlier in the Gospels are historical, which makes the scene on the road to Cæsarea scarcely possible, or the scene is historical and the descriptions of the Evangelists, who introduce Jesus as the Messiah from the beginning, do not rest on historical recollection but rest on the transference of the later belief of the congregation back to the beginning of the life of Jesus or to the period of his public activities. But this circumstance, that the scene of Cæsarea contradicts the other presupposition of the Gospels so crassly, is a strong proof in favor of the historic character of Peter's answer; the distinct statement of time and place is also in its favor. To be sure the continuation of the narrative brings new difficulties, even if we confine ourselves to Mark and disregard the glorification of Peter as the rock upon which the Church should be founded (an expression which is certainly

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unhistorical and reported only by Matthew). On the strength of Peter's declaration, Mark reports that Jesus charged the disciples to tell no man of him, that is of what they had just heard concerning his Messiahship; and that Jesus began to teach them the necessity for the suffering of the son of man, the rejection by the Jewish hierarchy, as well as that he would be killed and rise from the dead after three days; thereupon Peter warned him strongly against this fate, but Jesus rebuked the anxious disciple as a Satan whose thoughts were human and not divine.

Immediately the question arises: Why did Jesus forbid the disciples to speak of his Messiahship? If he believed himself to be the Messiah, or more exactly speaking, if he believed himself chosen for that honor, must he not have wished that the people should hear his faith and that of his disciples? Must he not have wished the greatest number possible to share that faith? In fact, a Messiah who would wish to be a Messiah only in secret is something so difficult to comprehend, that we readily understand how some recent critics have arrived at the idea that Jesus himself did not wish to be considered the Messiah, but that the belief of the congregation had first ascribed this honor to the resurrected Jesus and not to the Jesus of earth. Others have attempted to solve this difficulty by assuming that Jesus prevented the publication of his Messiahship by reason of pedagogic wisdom and foresight, because he feared that the people would take him for a political

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Messiah, whereas he himself desired to be only a spiritual Messiah, or, by his death and resurrection, a heavenly Messiah. But a number of serious objections combat that hypothesis. It is a fair question to ask: Would it not have been the simplest way of avoiding any such misunderstanding, for Jesus to declare plainly and openly that he did wish to come as the Messiah, not in the traditional Jewish sense, but in some new spiritual or heavenly sense? There is no trace anywhere that he wished to give the traditional Jewish messianic idea any such new interpretation, just as little as in the case of the traditional idea of the kingdom of God. Yet both would have been urgently needed, not only for the people, but even for his disciples; for the Gospels often reveal the extent to which the latter shared the traditional and popular notion of the Messiah and his kingdom. For example when the sons of Zebedee ask for the places of honor at the right and left hand of the Messiah in his glory (Mark 10, 37) or when the festal procession, of which the disciples were a part, is doing messianic honors, greeting Jesus as the "Son of David," upon his entry into Jerusalem, and rejoicing in the "kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David." (Mark 11, 9 seq.) Assuming that the pedagogic wisdom and foresight of Jesus had caused him to suppress all messianic announcements, we must expect that on such occasion Jesus would not have let the opportunity pass of telling his disciples and friends that these expecta-

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tions were error and of enlightening them as to the true sense of his messianic ideas. He does this nowhere; he did not disabuse the minds of the sons of Zebedee about the places of honor in his kingdom, but simply explained that God, and not he, would assign them; silently, he accepted Peter's acknowledgment of his Messiahship and the honors of the festal procession; at the cleansing of the temple, he appears the powerful reformer of existing cult-customs, and in the parable of the faithless husbandmen, he declares to the hierarchs with little concealment the nearing end of their dominion. It seems to me that all of this is not calculated to give the impression that Jesus rejected the popular notion of the Messiah as the king of God's people and substituted for it the new notion of a spiritual Messiah. The notion of a purely spiritual Messiah, acting only as an educator of the attitude of men, but lacking all external power and honor, was entirely strange, not only to the faith of the Jews, but even to the early-Christian congregation; the latter were convinced that by resurrecting their master, Jesus, God had seated him at his right hand and thereby "made him Lord and Christ," that is, God had conferred upon him that royal dignity and governing power which was inseparably bound up with the idea of the Messiah. How thoroughly must the disciples have misunderstood their master to the end, if his thoughts had not been of that nature, but had been occupied entirely with a spiritual Messiah! This

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idea like that of the spiritual kingdom of God is mainly a product of theological reflection, far removed from the naive, realistic conceptions both of Judaism and early-Christianity.

If the hypothesis of a " spiritual Messiah " is consequently to be eliminated from a historical consideration, the open question remains whether there is any advantage in the hypothesis of a " heavenly Messiah,"—the assumption that Jesus believed as did the early congregation after his death, that although Jesus had not been the Messiah while on earth, yet by his death and resurrection he had been chosen and elevated to the heavenly kingship of God's people, as such he would reveal himself powerfully on his return from heaven and set up his kingdom on earth? This hypothesis seems to find support in those Gospel passages, according to which Jesus is said to have predicted accurately concerning his passion and death, his resurrection and return in the clouds of heaven. But close scrutiny to discover whether Jesus really could have uttered these sayings causes strongest doubts. The threefold repetition of the prophecy itself, with its increasing elaboration of details (Mark 8, 31; 9, 31; 10, 33 seq.) leads us to suppose that it is the Evangelist who has transformed the knowledge and hopes of the congregation into a wonderful foreknowledge and foretelling of Jesus. Had Jesus actually foretold it, the fact would be incomprehensible that no one in the closer or larger circle of his disciples had a premoni-

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tion of his approaching death and subsequent resurrection; the catastrophe came so unexpectedly and, for the moment, destroyed their hopes so utterly that they lost control and courage and scattered to their homes. Besides, the Evangelists themselves say that the prophecies of the passion and resurrection of Jesus, free from ambiguity as they were supposed to be, were not understood by the disciples at any time; plainly, by this, they betray the fact that in the circle of the disciples nothing was known of the supposedly-prophesied fate of Jesus before its actual occurrence; in short, that the prophecy could not have been uttered. We will see later that the conduct of Jesus during the last days at Jerusalem does not give the impression that he regarded the prospect of his death as an absolute necessity and divinely-decreed fate. Thus the hypothesis that Jesus expected a heavenly Messiahship plainly becomes untenable.

If neither the spiritual nor the heavenly Messiah can be adhered to, there seems no other alternative than this: either Jesus did not wish to be the Messiah at all or he wished to be or become the Messiah in the traditional, popular sense. There is a third possibility thinkable, a mediatory hypothesis, which is perhaps best calculated to explain the historical course of events. In any event, it is certain that Jesus did not appear with a messianic claim from the beginning, but did appear simply as the prophet of the approaching kingdom of God; to prepare its coming

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by his utterances, he regarded as his immediate divine mission. For this he could disregard the question whether God would be the only and immediate king in that new order of things which His divine omnipotence would bring to pass (as was expected, for example, in the apocryphal "Assumtio Mosis") or whether he would employ a human tool and make a man the messianic king; also, the question who that man would be. The thought that he himself might be the divinely selected one, may have been remote from the beginning; hence his rebuff of the messianic greetings which the sick are supposed to have spoken early in his career (if the Gospel reports are trustworthy).

When, however, the masses were inspired by the power of his instructive and healing utterances, and gathered about him, when the growing enmity of the scribes and Pharisees made it apparent at the same time that rescue of the starving and scattered flock was not to be expected from that quarter, then the thought may have haunted him more and more that he himself had been called to inaugurate the redeeming kingdom of God by a religious-social reformation. When the Baptist's question "Art thou he (the Messiah) who is to come?" was put to him, Jesus referred to his successes in healing sick bodies and souls and his preaching of a gospel for the poor. Surely he had no wish to be a Messiah such as the Pharisees dreamed of, who would help the Jewish nation to victory over the heathen and to

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release from the Roman rule, but a *Messiah of the poor,* the miserable and heavy-laden, the pious sufferer and the secluded—that small and powerless flock to whom the heavenly father intended to give the kingdom (Luke 12, 32). For the accomplishment of this task, his previous activity in Galilee no longer sufficed; in the capitol city of Jerusalem, at the heart of the hierarchy, the decision must be brought about. The acknowledgment of Peter seems to have ripened this decision to make a final move; from that on, everything points to a great determination, a bold undertaking, a decided purpose. Jesus did not move on to Jerusalem in order to be executed, nor did he go there to celebrate the feast; but he went there to win a victory over the hierarchy and realize the prophetic ideal of God's kingdom in the regenerated nation. Naturally, he was not unmindful of the difficulties and dangers involved, and therefore he requires of his disciples such determination as disregards all considerations and is prepared to make any sacrifice. At that period he may have said: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened till it be accomplished! Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." (Luke 12, 49 seq.) That is the sincere language of a hero who is moving toward a hard and decisive battle, one who is prepared to lose all, even his life, in God's cause; but because he is not

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blind to the possibility of his own annihilation, he is still far removed from thinking it inevitable. Jesus was convinced that he was doing God's work; he believed in the wonder-working and omnipotent God, who could, if need be, aid him with more than twelve legions of angels: Why should he not be certain of the victory of his cause, despite such anxieties of the human mind, as Peter had expressed? In fact the reports of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and his doings there, indicate no elegiac, resigned mood, but on the contrary they display the heroic trait of daring endeavor, courageous struggle and joyous hope.

As the host of his enthusiastic friends grew on the way to Jerusalem, as through Jericho and from there to Jerusalem, the entire journey became one triumphal procession culminating in that enthusiasm of the pious pilgrim host which found vent in the outburst of messianic cries of joy, Jesus withstood no longer; when his opponents called his attention to the suspicious nature of these cries, he is said to have answered: "If these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." (Luke 19, 40.) He considered the enthusiasm of the masses to be an elemental force, which no human violence could check. On the next day, he visited the temple; when he saw the busy activity of the dealers in sacrificial animals and Jewish coins overrunning the outer court, he drove them out with their wares. This business was connected with the sacrificial service and therefore Jesus' reformatory action seemed to be an attack

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on the sacrificial service itself, and indirectly on the hierarchs, who derived their income from and based their social position of power on the sacrificial service. After opening the battle thus, Jesus continued it during the following days in addresses to the people. With fiery words, he reads the register of their sins to the scribes and the Pharisees,—hypocritical commerce with religion, ambition and greed, agitatorial proselytizing which only makes men more wicked, lying casuistry, straining out gnats and swallowing camels, mania for outward cleansing and inward hypocrisy and iniquity, worship of the prophets' sepulchres and hatred of their spirit. In the parable of the faithless husbandman (Mark 12, 12 seq.) the hierarchs perceived that he set the prospect of the approaching judgment before them, in that God would take his vineyard, the stewardship of his people, and give it to "others," which meant, naturally, to Jesus and his friends whom God had appointed for the kingdom. (Cp. Luke 12, 32; 22, 29.) From that time on, the hierarchs sought to remove the uncomfortable reformer, but fearing the people who were much attached to him, they dared not attack him openly. (Mark 12, 12-37.) They thought it safer to seize him in the dead of night and deliver him over to the Roman governor as a messianic pretender and public agitator; in which case, they well knew, the governor would make short work of him.

Jesus knew the deadly enmity of the hierarchs

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and prepared himself for the worst; but he never thought of a criminal trial before his Roman superiors. He was conscious of his innocence in that direction because he had commanded the separation of politics and religion and the recognition of the Imperial authority. (Mark 12, 17.) One reference in the Gospel of Luke leads to the highly probable conclusion that he scented danger from another quarter; in the Life-of-Jesus romances, this reference is regularly overlooked, but it is of great importance to the historian. While Jesus was celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples on the evening of the day before his death, he commanded them urgently to procure swords at any price, even if they had to sell their cloaks to do so, and when they answered that there were two swords at hand, he said: it is enough (Luke 22, 36-38). Such words cannot be interpreted allegorically without doing them great violence; literally accepted, they can mean only one thing, that Jesus considered weapons urgently needed for defense in case of murderous attack by hired assassins. What thought could be closer than that the hierarchs would seek to remove him silently by assassination, inasmuch as criminal cases were no longer in their jurisdiction since the Roman occupation? Jesus wanted to be ready for such an attack and two swords sufficed for the purpose. When, later, in the garden of Gethsemane, he saw himself surrounded by a host of the servitors of the authorities and not by assassins, he forbade all

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further opposition on the part of the disciples (Luke 22, 50). Luke's reference to the purchase of the swords is so much the more to be considered a sure historical recollection because it stands in the most glaring contrast to that later church-view of Jesus' death, which colors the other gospel descriptions. If Jesus feared assassination on the last evening of his life and prepared to meet it with arms, he could never have known or predicted his death on the cross; these predictions could only have been put into his mouth subsequently.

The same holds good of the Gospel passage by which Jesus is supposed to have made bread and wine at the last supper, the symbols of his dead body and his flowing blood. Later on, we will see that these words originated in the Apostle Paul's mystical teaching of the sacrificial death of Christ and its sacramental celebration in the Communion—a teaching unknown to the oldest congregation and therefore not heard by them from Jesus' lips. The words spoken at the Last Supper, which actually belonged to the original tradition, do not breathe the mood of separation or premonition of death; on the contrary, they are full of joyous hope of victory. Thus, the words about drinking wine in the kingdom of the father after it had come, and the promise to the disciples that under the kingship of Jesus they will sit at his table and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22, 18; 22, 28 seq.) It is easily possible that this joyous mood could give way to more sombre

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thoughts at this critical juncture; if the text of the prayer which Jesus uttered in the solitude of the garden of Gethsemane is correctly handed down to us, then it shows that in that hour Jesus' soul was suffused with an anxious premonition; yet his swaying between fear and hope is another sign that the thought of his death as an absolute necessity was still remote. We may well assume that his trust in that God, who can save his own by miracles and angels, was his mainstay even during the disgrace and maltreatment of the last day: not until he was on the cross did the dying man lose hope; not until life was ebbing, did he break forth in the lament: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

To this heartrending tragedy as his life's close, one thought alone can reconcile us—that it was the inevitable, providential means of entrance into a higher life. The grain of wheat must fall to earth and die in order to bring forth rich fruit; the Jewish Messiah, the reformer of his people, had to disappear so that "the Christ after the spirit" could live in the faith of his congregation to be—to make way for him who was in truth to become the world redeemer and the king of the realm. His limitations of age and nation, the messianic-apocalyptic form of his thought and activity, they had to succumb in the unequal struggle with the powers of the earth; but the universal, spiritual kernel of his life work, the ideal of the kingdom of that God who is the good will and redeeming love in the hearts of his children

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and in the life of his realm—that remained and marched triumphantly across the world, so that even to-day it is the saving and educating force which gives eternal content and value to human life in the individual and the race.

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THE MESSIANIC CONGREGATION

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THE MESSIANIC CONGREGATION

THE death of Jesus seems to have destroyed all the hopes which the disciples had centred in him. The blow had struck them so unexpectedly that they fled precipitately after his arrest and Peter disclaimed him in cowardly fashion. Not one of them was present at the cross; only a few of the faithful women at a distance watched the sad end. Some time later the disciples, who had been discouraged shortly before, appeared publicly before the people as inspired witnesses of the resurrection and the elevation of Jesus to heavenly Messiahhood. What had brought about this great revulsion? What had they experienced in the meantime, strong enough to lift their drooping spirits, to fan into flame their disappearing hopes, so strong that they believed in Jesus as the Messiah more confidently than ever and gave public testimony to their belief? At this decisive point, the historical method has least right to withdraw from a critical examination of the traditional stories and must bring to light the probable sequence of events on the strength of the few but certain facts. In such case, more cannot be expected of historical research, than such an explanation of the procedure as comports with the analogy of other human experience and is therefore thinkable and probable.

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Every careful reader of the Gospels must see that the stories of the disciples' Easter experiences are so contradictory that they afford no decided, clear notion. No man can gain any idea of a resurrected body which is both entirely material, tangible like any earthly body and can eat, and then again seems to be of such an unearthly nature that it can go through locked doors, suddenly appear and then disappear and then be lifted up to heaven. Equally contradictory are the Gospel stories about the locality in which it appeared; in Mark, the disciples are directed to Galilee in order to see the resurrected one there: so, too, in Matthew, where the story of the appearance on the mountain in Galilee is actually narrated, but not until after a similar story had been reported about the appearance to the two Marys on the home-journey from the tomb to the city. Luke, however, only tells of appearances on the Emmaus road near Jerusalem and then to the assembled disciples at Jerusalem; not only that he knows nothing of a Galilean appearance, but he precluded its possibility, by having the disciples directed to wait at Jerusalem until the pouring out of the holy spirit on Pentecost. John agrees with Luke in telling of appearances at Jerusalem and with Matthew in telling of one before Mary at the grave; finally, in the supplementary chapter, he tells of an appearance to some of the disciples at the sea of Genesareth, nowhere else reported. Paul knows nothing of the women's discovery of an empty grave and the ap-

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pearance of an angel or of Christ, which the Evangelists make much of; but he makes out a series of appearances to Kephas, the twelve and more than five hundred brothers, to Jacobus, the entire group of Apostles and finally to Paul himself. Such is the oldest report, but it does not tally with any of the later evangelical reports. This suffices to show how little the oldest congregation knew about the matter; the traditions handed down to us are disconnected and inharmonious legends, created by poetic imagination and apologetic reflection. Will we succeed in working through these superimposed layers of legend to the historical foundation of actual facts?

Perhaps we may hope to do so by noting certain suggestions given by the oldest witnesses, Paul and Mark, independently of one another and yet in agreement. Mark makes Jesus prophesy (14, 27): "All ye shall be offended: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered abroad. Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." To this, then, he makes the angel at the grave refer in his direction to the women; they should go and tell his disciples and especially Peter that Jesus goeth before them into Galilee, there shall they see him, as he had said previously to them (16, 7). This prophecy subsequently attributed to Jesus leads to a certain conclusion regarding the actual course of events, immediately after Jesus' death. The disciples had become confused in their faith, they were scattered and returned to their Galilean

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homes; *there* they saw the crucified Jesus again for the first time as a living man, and among them Peter saw him first. Granted that we find this to be the oldest historical tradition, then it follows that all the stories about the appearances of the resurrected Jesus at or near Jerusalem on Easter Sunday are to be considered later legends, lacking all historical basis; with them goes the story of the finding of the empty grave and, therewith, the bodily emergence of Jesus from the grave. Another reflection, suggested by Paul, leads to the same conclusion. When he places the Christ appearance of his own experience (I Cor. 15, 8) on a level with all the other appearances, he naturally presupposes the similarity of these appearances and justifies us in judging the previous ones to have been similar in nature to his own. Now, it is certain that that which Paul was convinced that he had seen on the way to Damascus was not Christ in the flesh but Christ in the spirit—a celestial being of spirit or light, similar in nature to their thought of angels. Such a supernatural being cannot be the object of sense perception, but of an inner seeing, the vision or hallucination of a state of ecstasy, which is not conjured up by any present, perceivable object, but is the externalized mirroring of an inner state of the soul, an "objectivation" of its own consciousness. This agrees with Paul's saying, that God revealed his Son *in him*, that the light shone *in his heart*, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"

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(Gal. 1, 16; II Cor. 4, 6) and with Paul's glorying in "the visions and the revelations" wherein he had heard the inexpressible without the mediation of the physical senses (II Cor. 12, 1, seq.). Therefore, we will have to regard the first appearance of Christ which Peter experienced in the same way as that of Paul who saw the celestial light-appearance of Christ in a sudden ecstatic vision on the way to Damascus—a physical experience, in no wise an incomprehensible miracle, but psychologically conceivable according to many analogous experiences in all ages.

In the legends of saints and martyrs it is a regularly-recurring feature that the saint, shortly after his death, reappears in dreams and in waking hours (ecstasies) and bids his people be of good cheer, adding words of consolation and instruction: The longing love loses itself completely in memories and the precious image of the departed presents itself so vividly, that, in the supreme moment of ecstatic enthusiasm, faith believes itself face to face with the living. When we consider Peter's nature, a lively temperament, easily swayed by sudden and momentary impulses of emotion, it becomes easy to conceive that he should be the first to go through this experience. Following other analogies, it is also easy to understand that this experience of inspired vision did not confine itself to Peter, but repeated itself soon for the other disciples and, finally, for assemblages of believers. It is a well-known fact

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of experience that there is a contagion in the condition of high grades of excited psychical life, especially of religious enthusiasm and ecstasy and that such conditions overpower entire assemblages with an elemental force. Many succumb to the suggestion of individuals to such an extent that they actually repeat the experience; others, less susceptible, imagine, at least, that they see and hear the thing suggested; dull and sober participants are so carried away by the enthusiasm of the mass that faith furnishes what their own vision fails to supply.

The historical basis of the disciples' belief in the resurrection we find in the ecstatic visionary experiences emanating from an individual and soon convincing all; in these experiences they believed that they saw the crucified master alive and raised to heavenly glory. At home in the world of the miraculous, the imagination wove the garment to clothe that which was moving and suffusing the soul. At bottom, the moving force of the resurrection of Jesus in their faith was nothing more than the ineffaceable impression which one person had made upon them; their love and their confidence in him were stronger than death. This miracle of love and not a miracle of omnipotence was the foundation of the resurrection-belief in the early-congregation.

Therefore it did not stop at passing emotions, but the newly-awakened, inspired belief compelled action; the disciples recognized their life-task.

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They were to proclaim to their compatriots that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had delivered up to their enemies, was the Messiah; that God had shown it the more by the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to heaven and that Jesus would soon return to take up his messianic government of earth. In a certain sense, their teachings were the continuation of Jesus' announcement of the kingdom, but with the important difference, that the belief in the elevation of Jesus to the heavenly Messiahship was their point of departure and mainstay; the teaching that Jesus, the man, was resurrected and would return took precedence over the teaching of the coming kingdom, and the miraculous character of the messianic king expected from heaven, lifted the idea of his kingdom to a higher level; therewith, the broadening of the national limitation and the spiritualization of the earthly character of the kingdom was at least prepared at the outset of the apostolic teaching, even if, as is natural, it was not at once completed.

Now that the teaching of the Jesus who had been resurrected and had become the heavenly Messiah, was the appeal made to the people, and they could not prove anything of the life of the crucified one of their own knowledge, other proofs had to be sought. They were found in the passages of the Old Testament which spoke of the rescue of the righteous from the pangs of death, whereby the protection from death (which was really meant) could easily be constructed to mean redemption from death

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through resurrection, and then these could be interpreted as prophecy of the Messiah Jesus (so Ps. 16, 10; 86, 13; Cp. Acts 2, 27; 13, 35). Particularly favorable for the apologetic purpose of the apostolic teaching was that passage in the second Isaiah which describes the patient suffering of the servant of God, who is carried off, not because of his own guilt, but by reason of the wickedness of his people; after laying down his own life as a sacrifice, he will see his offspring, live long and lead God's cause to victory. (Isaiah 53.) The application of this passage to the martyrdom and the renewed life of Jesus was apparent to the apostles and offered them a splendid means of using prophetic revelation as a support of the thought, previously unknown to Judaism, of a Messiah who had been elevated to heaven through death and resurrection. That this resurrected Jesus was enthroned by the side of God in heaven until his return, could be proven by the one hundred and tenth Psalm in which God says tc his anointed: "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The expectation of the early return of Jesus from heaven could be based on the prophecy of Daniel that a son of man would come before God on the cloud of heaven and would be appointed to rule over the kingdom of the holy. (Daniel 7, 13.) This passage was especially important to the early-congregation, because they looked upon it as containing in substance the entire programme of their new trans-

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cendental, messianic belief and their hope of the return. Hence, such expressions were soon attributed to Jesus himself; at the hearing before the High-priest (at which certainly none of his followers could have been present to serve as a trustworthy ear witness) Jesus is supposed to have said: "and ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14, 62.) After it had become usual to designate Jesus, the Messiah who was to return from heaven, by the apocalyptical name "the son of man," the expression was employed in those passages where the Jesus of earth is made to prophesy his approaching passion and resurrection (Mark 8, 31, etc.); finally, this expression acquired the meaning of the standing messianic self-designation of Jesus, which is attributed to him regularly in the Gospels from the beginning, without reference to his resurrection or return; this corresponds to the (naturally unhistorical) presupposition that he announced himself from the beginning as the Messiah.

Altogether the religious reflection of the early-Christian congregation moved entirely in the direction of interpreting and arranging the preceding earth-life of Jesus in the new light of the newly-won belief in the heavenly Messiahship of Jesus. In that life they sought signs and guarantees of his future appearance in messianic glory. Whatever was contradictory to this in the past, such as passion,

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disgrace and death, that was subjected to a conciliatory and satisfying interpretation from the standpoint of the belief in his return. This passion was not to be regarded as an unexpected fate, destroying the messianic hopes, but as something known of Jesus long before, something foretold as far back as the prophets and the Psalmists. Throughout the Old Testament they sought and found exemplars and prophecies of the happenings to the Messiah, Jesus. The story of his passion, in particular, was worked over from this viewpoint; for each feature, some prophetic example was sought in the fate of some righteous sufferer; again, on the strength of these supposed prophecies, new features would be added to the story, so as to make it plastic and edificatory. The legend-making power of the religious imagination was actively engaged on other stories beside that of the passion. The expected miracle of the appearance of the heavenly Messiah Jesus gave a reflex glory to the life of the prophet Jesus and filled the gaps of historical knowledge with the pictures of pious poetry. One presupposition set the standard: the Messiah had performed and surpassed in performance all the wonderful deeds and experiences which the Old Testament narrated of Moses and Elijah and its great men of God. Not alone sober reflection, but prophetic inspiration, also, reading the Old Testament in the light of its fulfillment by the Messiah Jesus, created these new legends, modeling them

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after the old ones. At the same time, apologetic motives influenced the Gospel tradition. Faith sought to see in the earth-life of Jesus the model and guarantee of that which the ennobled Christ was to mean in the present and in the future: he who was to return as king and judge, faith presupposed, must have proven himself by miraculous deeds to be lord over nature during his sojourn on earth, he must have been the conqueror of demons and the lawgiver of the new people of God; by divine proclamations, he must have established the fact that he was the son of God, gifted with the miraculous power of spirit. So the story of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain (according to its original sense, clearly recognizable in Mark) is a symbolic presentation of the glorification of Jesus through his resurrection and at the same time an imitation of the experience of Moses on the mountain where the Law was given; as Moses' countenance shone with the reflected light of God, so Jesus, at the transfiguration, was changed into a figure of light, which was his permanently after the resurrection; in the presence of Moses and Elijah, the representatives of Law and Prophecy, the divine voice of Heaven declared Jesus to be the beloved Son to whom all were to hearken thenceforward. This displays the oldest form of the faith in Christ, according to which the resurrection and the ascension to the heavenly world of light "made both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom ye

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crucified." (Acts 2, 36.) Soon came the desire to see the Son of God and the Messiah not only in the ascended but even in the Jesus of earth; for, it was thought, how could such great miracles be wrought if it had not been that "God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power"? (Acts 10, 38.) Then the question, when could that have happened? Was it not before he took up his public work? Thus the baptism by John seemed most fitting for the equipment of Jesus with the messianic spirit. But how did that happen? Once, so ran the sacred legend, the spirit rested, brooding upon the waters of chaos before creation, "like a dove" the Rabbis said: thus, at the creation of the new world, the spirit is made to descend again on Jesus in the shape of a dove, thenceforth to dwell in him as the all-regenerating principle. A legend preserved in an extra-canonical gospel tells of a fiery appearance in the Jordan, similar to the fiery appearance at the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. Accompanying this descent of the spirit was a heavenly voice which originally in all probability (according to an old version) uttered the words of the second Psalm: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee!"—wherewith the miraculous baptism is explained as the solemn initiation of Jesus as the Son of God and the spirit-laden Messiah.

For a long period, this was the prevailing idea, until it was superseded by the later legend of the supernatural birth of Jesus, according to which he

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did not *become* the son of God during the course of his life on earth, but is said to have been *born* so, in the actual, physical sense. We will return later to this latest form of the early-Christian belief in Christ, and show the heathen models which influenced its construction.

Thus the seeds of future Christ-belief of the church were sown in the early-congregation; of course, they were not dogmatic doctrines but legends full of meaning, children of faith, of prophetic intuition and poetizing imagination. In form and content, these poems were still closely related to the popular idea of the Jewish messianic expectation. The Jews themselves hoped for the coming of a Messiah who was to regenerate God's people; and in the Jewish apocalypses the Messiah was set forth, sometimes at least, as a supermundane being descended from the heavenly heights. At first, the believers in Jesus differed from the other Jews only in this, that they regarded their master, whom the national leaders had rejected and the Roman authorities had crucified, as the Messiah awaited from Heaven. Herein, however, lay the beginning of a very important distinction. By combining the messianic idea with the person of the crucified Jesus, that idea acquired a new content; its national-Jewish nature gave way to the human ethical character of the merciful friend of the weary and the heavy laden, the innocent, persecuted sufferer whose passion led to his glory. The thought of a " suffer-

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ing Messiah," unknown until then in Judaism, brought an entirely new tone into the religious mood and mode of thinking. Besides, the time of the Messiah's arrival into glory, for which the resurrection seemed to be the prologue and the guarantee, was made the immediate future and became an object of most ardent hopes; the rejection of the present, disintegrating world and the yearning expectation of the coming new world which was to bring release from all present oppression in its train —to far greater extent than ever, this became the fundamental note of pious faith.

If we ask, whether there was Christianity in this old circle of disciples, the answer may be both Yes and No. It was present insofar as the congregation felt itself bound by the belief in Jesus as the Lord and Christ, the coming judge and redeemer, who would bring to pass the promised kingdom of God in his regenerated people and insofar as they strove to imitate the moral example of the master in their fraternal, communal life. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked, that this brotherhood of Jesus was far removed from a separation from Judaism as a new and peculiar religious community, and did not think of securing heathen followers. They desired, rather, to be nothing more than the Messiah-believing nucleus of the Jewish people; they hoped to convert the whole nation to whom the promise belonged and they felt themselves bound by the Mosaic Law as the basis of the Jewish religion.

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According to the description in the Acts, undoubtedly correct, the early-congregation moved entirely in the forms of Jewish piety, from which they felt that neither the words nor the example of Jesus released them. The comrades of the messianic brotherhood visited the Temple, kept the hours of prayer, the festivals and fast days, the ritual laws, the customary oaths—all of this with a conscientiousness, which placed their ceremonial piety beyond doubt even in the eyes of the Jewish people. Jacobus, the brother of the master, who was especially observant and survived in the congregation under the name of "the righteous" called the Jewish-Christians "zealous of the law" (Acts 21, 20), which means Jews most strict in their observance. They had learned from Jesus to put the moral above the ceremonial, but from that point to an insight into the lack of religious meaning of the Jewish ceremonial Law and even to the practical departure from it, was a long journey which Jesus never had induced the disciples to undertake. There was no idea of ecclesiastical organization in the messianic congregation: how could there be any thought of creating the machinery of a church for the short period until the return of the master? Baptism and communion were not by any means acts of worship and signs of differentiation in the congregation believing in Christ, in the sense which they later assumed. Baptism was a symbolical act of purification and dedication which differed from

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the baptism of John's disciples only by the acknowledgment of Jesus ; there was nothing in it which loosened the tie to Judaism. The early Christian love-feast differed from those of the Essenes and similar religious associations only by the fact, that they felt fraternally bound by the faith in Jesus and the imitation of his love.

The most peculiar feature of the early-congregation, their so-called common ownership of property reminds one of the Essenes; it was not so rigidly carried out as in the latter Order, for, according to the Acts, no one was in duty bound to turn over all his possessions to the congregation; probably, it extended so far as to care for the regular support of the poorer brethren out of a common treasury and especially for the common meal of the brothers. However, this solidarity of a brotherly service of love and this religiously-inspired socialism of the early-congregation were of greatest importance: to a certain extent, it was the beginning of the practical realization of the ideal of the redeeming kingdom of God, which the naive faith expected would appear fully in the miraculous appearance of the Son of Man on the clouds of Heaven.

In the small and quiet circle of the brotherhood, gathered about the name of Jesus, there were, indeed, present the living seeds of a religious and moral world regeneration. In order to develop freely and powerfully, they had to be released from the national and legal fetters of Judaism. For this accomplish-

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ment, the seeds needed to be transplanted out of the rigid Jewish soil of Palestine into the wide world of heathen religions and of Greek culture; in both of these the elements were waiting and ready, by the acquisition of which the new spirit was to broaden out into a world religion and crystallize into the Christian Church.

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Book II

THE EVOLUTION OF EARLY-CHRISTIANITY INTO THE CHURCH

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THE APOSTLE PAUL

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THE APOSTLE PAUL

We have seen that the faith of the early-congregation at Jerusalem differed so slightly from Judaism that it presents the appearance of a sect believing in the Messiah, rather than a new religious community. Had this conservative attitude of the first disciples been maintained, there never would have been a Christian church, but in all probability the reform movement inaugurated by Jesus would have been destroyed with the Jewish state. The work of Jesus escaped this danger through Paul, who had been converted from a passionate persecutor into a follower of the faith in Christ; he recognized what was new and peculiar in this faith more clearly than the first disciples, and, more energetic than they, he separated it from the Jewish religion of the Law and elevated it to the plane of an independent religion for humanity. According to his own words, he knew himself to be chosen and called before birth by God's grace, to perform this world-historical deed. Innate natural tendencies, external circumstances and life-conduct united in equipping him for his great life mission.

Paulus (according to the Jewish name Saulus) was born of Jewish parents in Tarsus, a Greek city in Cilicia. His education in the Jewish household

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of his parents early wakened his religious sense,—the pious feeling of absolute dependence on God and the duty of serving Him. In the school of Gamaliel he was trained to become a strict Pharisaic teacher of the Law. It was his earnest endeavor to appear upright before God, by the strictest fulfillment of the Law's demands. Naturally, this statute-service was unable to set his conscience at ease; his later utterances about the conflict between the divine laws in the soul and the sinful instincts of the members, about the dependence, the weakness, the misery of man tortured by the slavish service to the Law—these were the outgrowth of his personal experience. This inner dissatisfaction of Saulus, the earnest Pharisee for the Law, in a certain sense, contained the seed of the later apostolic teaching of the freedom of God's children.

No less important was the fact that Paul hailed from Tarsus, the Greek city, which, after Alexandria, was the main seat of Hellenic culture, especially of the Stoic school. Several of its teachers, whose names we know, came from Tarsus; among others, there was that Athenodorus, the teacher of Cicero and Augustus, whom his grateful fellow citizens made a hero upon his death and celebrated annually with a memorial feast. Young Paul certainly must have known of such a celebrity in his native town and learned something of his doings and his teachings. Besides, it was hardly necessary for him to attend the lectures of the Stoic teachers

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in order to become acquainted with their main ideas; in their popular form, as we have them in the writings of Seneca and Epictetus, these ideas were enunciated daily on the streets and in the market-places by public speakers, who called themselves philosophers, soul doctors or messengers of truth. How could they remain unknown, under such circumstances, to a bright Jewish lad, such as we must picture Paul to have been? The epistles of Paul are the best proof that he did know these ideas, for they contain such remarkable coincidences of thought and speech with the Stoic philosopher Seneca, that some have held that Seneca was the teacher of Paul while others maintain that Seneca was Paul's pupil. While both suppositions are impossible, the fact of these parallel passages points to a common source which is to be found in the culture of that period saturated with Stoic thought; it was a strong influence, even upon the Jewish dispersion in Asia Minor, in Syria and in Egypt.

Not only Greek philosophy but the heathen religions scarcely could be learned better anywhere than in Tarsus, for at that time, the mystery-cults were spreading from the Orient through the West. As early as Pompey's time, Tarsus was a seat of the Mithra religion which had come from Persia and mingled with the cults worshipping the sun-god in Hither-Asia—especially in Phrygia, where it had taken over certain customs of the orgiastic religion of Attis and Cybele. In a Mithra liturgy still

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extant, the initiatory service, by which proselytes were admitted into the Mithra religion, is represented as a mystical dying and rebirth, by which the guilt of the old life is cleansed and extirpated and a new, immortal life is created through the spirit; hence the initiated spoke of themselves as "reborn for eternity." So striking is the connection of these ideas with Paul's teaching of Christian baptism as a community of death and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6) that the thought of historical relation between the two cannot be evaded. The Mithra-sacraments also included a sacred meal, at which the sanctified bread and a cup of water or even wine served as mystic symbols of the distribution of the divine life to the Mithra-believers. At such celebrations, the latter appeared in animal-masks indicating by these representations attributes of their god Mithra; the celebrants had "put on" their god, which meant that they had entered into a community of life with him. This, too, is paralleled closely by Paul's teaching of the Lord's Supper as a "communion of the blood and of the body of Christ" (I Cor. 10, 16), which he who had been baptized, has "put on" (Gal. 3, 27).

When it is remembered that the mystical teaching of both sacraments, the baptism and the Lord's Supper, is peculiar to the Apostle Paul and finds no explanation in the older tradition of the congregation, the supposition is natural, that it is based on a combination of Christian ideas with the ideas and

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rites of the Mithra religion, as Paul might have known them from his home in Tarsus. Not that Saul, the Pharisee, ever felt any sympathy for these heathen rites; yet all his Jewish rigorism could not hide from his ken the longing for salvation, purification and guarantee of life revealed by these mysteries, yea, his interest must have been the more intense, the stronger the vibration of the related chord in his own bosom. Oft the question may have forced itself upon him: whether the heathen world seeking for God with such intense longing would ever achieve truth and peace? If so, how much of it? Was it to come through Moses' Law? But this Law did not give the earnest Jew inner satisfaction, how much less could it serve as the common highway of the nations to God! Saul learned the answer to this question in the decisive hour of his life, which transformed the man-eager-for-the-Law into Paul, the Apostle of Christ.

Historically, Paul appears first in connection with the martyrdom of Stephen, the Hellenist, who seems to have drawn most far-reaching, reformatory conclusions from the faith in the Messiah Jesus, conclusions far beyond any of the other disciples. Stephen was accused of saying that Jesus would destroy the Temple and change the customs delivered by Moses (Acts 6, 14). When Paul, the Pharisee rabbi, heard such utterances of the adherents to the faith in the Messiah Jesus, and heard public defense of them in the synagogue, it is con-

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ceivable that they aroused his greatest indignation. His Pharisaic presuppositions sufficed to rob the belief in a crucified Messiah of all sense, but the subversive conclusions of a Stephen made it a criminal attack on the most sacred traditions of the fathers. Therefore, Paul played the part of chief witness at the execution of Stephen and developed such eagerness in the further persecution of the congregation, that the hierarchs bestowed upon him full power to undertake the painful trial of those members of the messianic congregation who had sought refuge in the Jewish colony at Damascus. But the persecutor was to arrive at Damascus—a convert.

There are three reports of Paul's conversion in The Acts, in chapters 9, 22 and 26. The details of this thrice-told story cannot lay claim to consideration as accurate history; one reason and a sufficient one being the many contradictions they contain. The words which one report puts into the mouth of the appearing Christ, another makes Ananias say at Damascus; in one version, the companions of Paul fall to the ground with him, in another they remain standing; in one, they hear a voice but see nothing, while in another they see a light but hear nothing. Deducting these minor features, for which the narrator is responsible, this substance remains: on the way to Damascus, Paul suddenly saw a light-appearance descending from heaven and heard a voice which he believed to be that of Jesus.

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Paul's own expressions in the epistles harmonize therewith in the essentials, inasmuch as, without exception, they refer to the revelation of Christ transfigured by the heavenly flood of light as the decisive experience, by which he was called not only to join the faithful disciples, but also to become Christ's apostle to the gentiles. For instance, when Paul asks (I Cor. 9, 1), "Have I not seen Jesus, our Lord?" this seeing taken with the context, can only refer to his conversion, the experience upon which his apostleship is based. Or in I Cor. 15, 9, after he has recited the previous appearances of Christ to other disciples, he continues: "And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am." It is clear, that here, too, he traces his call to apostleship back to an appearance of Christ, which, being essentially similar in nature to the previous appearances of Christ, he puts in the same series with them.

Certain as was his conviction of the objective truth of this Christ-appearance, other utterances point to the fact that he did not hold his experience to have been the sense-perception of a body of earthly matter, but the vision of a supersensual being, seen with the inner eye of the spirit. For he says (Gal. 1, 16): "it was the pleasure of God to reveal his Son *in* Me," and (II Cor. 4, 6) God

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sent light out of "darkness, who shined *in our hearts,* to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In complete agreement is his description (1 Cor. 15, 45 seq.) of Christ as the heavenly man, whose image we will bear at the resurrection and whose body has nothing in common with flesh and blood but is a spiritual or heavenly light-body, similar in nature to that which is attributed to heavenly beings. Such a spiritual or celestial body cannot be the immediate object of sense-perception by the eyes; the eyes can only see a glow of light, to which the inner sense or consciousness of the beholder ascribes the particular interpretation of an appearance of Christ. Thus, this belongs to the kind of inner *visionary appearances* and bears close relation to those other "revelations and visions" which are mentioned frequently in the life of the Apostle. In this connection, II Cor. 12, 1 seq. is particularly characteristic; the subjective, ecstatic state of consciousness is made clear by the addition, which says, that he does not know whether he was in the body or out of the body during the ecstasy when he believed himself caught up to the third heaven. When he speaks of peculiar bodily pains and states of weakness in connection with these ecstatic experiences, there is undoubtedly evidence of a state of nervous shock as the physical basis of the ecstatic experience. Hence, we may conclude that Paul's physical constitution was predisposed favorably to experiences of that nature.

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Other cases give an insight into the more positive psychological conditions preceding the approach of "revelations." If the decision to extend the missionary activity into Europe was brought about by a nocturnal vision (as related in Acts 16, 9 seq.) or if the decisive journey to the meeting of the Apostles at Jerusalem was the result of a revelation (as related in Gal. 2, 1), then it is clear that in such cases the "vision" or the "revelation" was the form of consciousness, in which Paul's spirit struggled through doubt to clarity, through inner uncertainty to firm decision. These visionary experiences never appeared without motive but always had their conditioning causes in the anterior soul-state, from which they are psychologically to be explained. The task thus put upon historical research is to make clear Paul's experience on the way to Damascus, after the analogy of other experiences, by attempting to throw light upon those psychological preceding conditions and motives which might be presupposed with probability to produce such a situation.

A noteworthy suggestion thereto is to be found in the narrative of Acts, where the words which Jesus says, when he appears, are made to read: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." (26, 14.) In his soul the persecutor of the congregation felt a goad which he strove vainly to oppose. What else could that goad have been but the grave doubt of his own

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right to persecute the congregation of Jesus, the doubt whether, after all, truth was on his side or on the side of the persecuted? How might such a doubt have come to the fanatical Pharisee? The first occasion was the impression which the deeds and the words of the persecuted must have produced upon him. Their joyous courage of confession suggested the question to him, whether a faith, so strong in suffering and in death, could be but an empty delusion or a godless deception? If, thereupon, he investigated the content of that faith more fully and considered the texts corroborative of its truth, it must have been the more difficult from the Pharisaic viewpoint, to deny its truth absolutely. The seers of the apocalypses of Henoch and Esra had spoken of a heavenly Messiah who would be hidden with God until he revealed himself in his time from heaven, whereas the usual conception of the Messiah was that of a man sprung from the Jewish nation, and therefore an earthly ruler. Might not this contradiction in the Jewish messianic expectations find its simplest solution in the Christian faith in the resurrected Jesus who ascended to heaven and would soon return as the heavenly Messiah? Naturally the crucifixion of Jesus was a vexation to Jewish thought, difficult to overcome; for the Law said that a curse rested upon those who died upon the scaffold. But now, supposing the Christians pointed to the suffering servant of God in the book of the Prophet Isaiah and considered the fate of their mas-

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ter as the fufillment of that prophecy: what could the Pharisee interpose, he who had been taught in his own school, to consider the innocent martyrdom of the righteous (for example, the Maccabean blood witnesses) as a means of atonement to make good the sins of their nation? Yes, the thought of a suffering and dying Messiah which might seem paradoxical to the Pharisee from one side, might be looked upon in another aspect as relief from a difficulty of the Pharisaic faith. They expected the early arrival of the Messiah who would save his oppressed people; at the same time it was one of their immovable presuppositions that only a righteous nation would see the day of the Messiah. Where was there such a righteous people, fully conforming to God's will and showing itself worthy to receive the Messiah? Had the strenuous exertion of the Pharisees to educate the nation to righteousness, accomplished any noticeable success? Did they not rather condemn and despise bitterly "the mass, which knows not the Law"? Must not every conscientious Pharisee, and Paul was such a one, have confessed that he himself was far removed from his ideal of righteousness? Was he not conscious that his eagerness for righteousness could not destroy the sinful tendencies, but rather aggravated and increased them? When he compared this dissatisfaction in his own heart, full of eagerness for the Law, with the joy produced by the faith in Christ in the disciples of Jesus, must not the question have forced itself upon him: may

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not this faith be the true salvation from the unfortunate slavery of the Law? May it not be the road to such a righteousness as never could be reached through the Law, a righteousness which was not a condition of the coming of the Messiah, but the effect of his having come,—the fruit of his death and resurrection?

We may suppose that such thoughts moved Paul's soul on the way to Damascus; the doubt of the correctness of his previous activity and of the truth of his previous faith entered like a fiery goad into his heart and produced the most terrible excitement of body and soul. If we add thereto the need for a quick decision, forced by the rapid approach to Damascus, the silence of solitude and the burning heat of the desert, we will be justified in our judgment, that the appearance of a vision, under the circumstances, was in no wise outside the category of similar experiences. Whatever moves the soul powerfully in such moments, imagination transforms into an object apparently seen and heard by the senses; while the exciting cause does not lie, as usual, in an external object but in an inner state of the soul. The picture of the heavenly Messiah, which occupied his thoughts, appeared before his eyes as a figure of light shining from heaven, and the denunciatory voice of his own conscience changed into Christ's cry from above: "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Such appearances and such voices of heavenly beings occur frequently in the

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religious history of the East and of the West; if the psychological explanation is conceded and generally accounted correct in other cases, such as that of Mohammed, no one can deny the right of historical research to apply the same method of explanation to similar appearances in Biblical history. The essence of Paul's experience was a victory of the superior Christian truth over the prejudices and narrowness of his Jewish consciousness; considering the presuppositions of the ancient world-view and his individual predisposition, it was both natural and it is easily comprehended that this inner convulsion of spirit should have taken on the form of an external miracle in his consciousness.

The consequences of this ecstatic-visionary experience were more far-reaching for Paul than had been the similar experiences for the older disciples. By the conviction that the crucified Jesus had been resurrected by God and taken to heaven, their faith in the master—a faith which had been won but weakened at times—was restored and, to a certain degree, elevated to a higher plane; but in other respects, no break with their Jewish consciousness had been caused. For Paul, however, the experience near Damascus was the beginning of a complete change in his entire religious consciousness; it seemed to him as though he had become a " new creature," who died with Christ for the world and for the Law, as though his old *ego* lived no longer while Christ only lived in him; the spirit of the Son

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of God had taken possession of his members and his powers, to use them henceforth as tools in his cause (Gal. 2, 19 seq.; 6, 14 seq.; II Cor. 5, 14 seq.).

From the beginning, he had discerned clearly, with the sharp eye of an enemy, the irreconcilable opposition of the national-Jewish worship of Law and messianic belief on the other hand and the new faith in the Messiah Jesus whom the Jews had rejected on the other; hence, after his conversion, it was not so easily possible for him, as it had been for the older disciples, to unite the old and the new. In the light of the resurrection and the heavenly Messiahship, the crucifixion of Jesus, which had been the source of annoyance and opposition, became the basis of a new religious world-view in which the Mosaic Law was abrogated by a new and higher principle. What was the nature of this new principle? What might be the object and the meaning of the death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus in the divine intention? In what way was a new road to salvation disclosed by this divine arrangement,—a way independent of the Jewish Law, designed for all men without distinction of birth, open to all who hearken to the message of salvation in the proclamation of Christ? These are the questions which moved Paul's soul after his conversion and his reflections upon them resulted in what is usually called "Pauline Theology"—the systematic expression of his personal belief in Christ.

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The Apostle Paul

From the beginning, Christians have been divided in their judgment on the teaching of the Apostle Paul; for some, it was the supreme truth and normative authority of the Christian faith, while for others, it was a perversion and falsification of the true gospel of Jesus, an arbitrary product of rabbinic speculation and dialectics. This strife is still being waged and it almost seems as though the antipathy to Paul is in the ascendant. As a reaction against the over-estimation of Pauline forms of dogma by the Church, this is comprehensible; for the Church tried to make of those forms binding, dogmatic laws for all time, regardless of the time, age and circumstances conditioning them. It is remarkable, at the same time, in our period which boasts of its historical culture and which, with psychological understanding, is so well able to enter into past modes of thought. I think that if we were to apply the method ordinarily employed, in the case of Paul, the religious teacher,* we would be equally protected from an overestimation of the ephemeral in his teachings and from a failure to recognize their historical importance and ideal truth.

Let us recollect it was a difficult task for the Apostle, who had to become a Greek for the Greeks and a Jew for the Jews in order to win them both for Christ, to give varied expression to the new

* Most reprehensible would be the suppression of his theology, while constantly speaking of his personal piety. The two cannot be separated, and Paul's historical achievement certainly does not rest upon his pious emotions but upon his theological thoughts.

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religion of salvation and the way he experienced it personally as a power for bliss, employing many forms of thought taken from the heathen and Jewish notions. There were the words of revelation in the Law and the prophets interpreted after the allegorical method of rabbinical exegesis; then, the legal categories of the Jewish school-theology, the legends and the apocalyptic pictures of Jewish pietism; his Jewish thinking had mastered these; but now he had to explain his new faith by them and as far as possible to reconcile it with them.

In the heathen countries, there was added the mystery-language of Oriental cults and the wisdom teachings of Greek popular philosophy; from these, also, the apostle to the heathen had to choose points of contact and forms of expression for his preaching of Christ. It is not surprising that such heterogeneous elements did not merge into a unity without contradictions; but what arouses wonder is the creative power and originality of the religious genius who could subordinate all of these elements of a chaotic, fermenting era to the *one* new spirit of the Christ-religion and who could transform them into vessels and symbols of the Christian idea.

In order to understand the great historical importance of this founder of Christian theology, it is not sufficient to count up the series of teachings and know the superficial criticism of them; but rather, one must enter into his period and his soul, and attempt to feel as he did during the religious

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experiences, to think over again his succession of thoughts. Only in that way can justice be done to him and only in that way is the fact of his tremendous historical influence to be understood. As far as this is possible in a condensed review, I will attempt to do so in what follows.

The peculiar novelty in the Pauline teaching is the conception of *the man Jesus as the Christ.* Paul agreed with the early-congregation in the belief that Jesus was a lineal descendant of the house of David "after the flesh," which means, according to his earthly mode of appearance; but, in his conception, that is not the real nature of Christ, it is merely a human form, taken on from time to time, embodying a heavenly spirit-being. Paul taught that, according to his real nature, Christ is a supermundane and preworldly being; characterized not directly as God, but as God's own, first-born son and image; to him is ascribed a mediatory participation in the work of creation. From heaven to earth, God sent his "Son" in the unique sense, the heavenly man, to take on a human body, to save a sinful humanity by his death, to conquer death by his resurrection and to be the mediator of life as well as monarch of a redeemed humanity. Paul took no further consideration of Jesus' life on earth; the one purpose of the incarnation of the heavenly Son of God was to suffer the death of a man (on the cross, the peculiar form of death, despised and accursed of the Law); by this bloody sacrifice of repentance,

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he was to do away with the guilt of sin, to break the curse of the Law and the power of death at the same time, and to guarantee the hope of immortality to all of those who, by faith and baptism, enter into the community of the son of God.

If we stop at this point in order to ask how Paul arrived at this peculiar method, he furnishes the answer that it was not by human traditions handed down from the oldest apostles, but an immediate revelation of Christ (Gal. 1, 12); speaking psychologically, it was the product of an intuition which involuntarily forced itself upon his spirit. But even among creative spirits, such intuitions are attached to certain notions, which have found their way from somewhere into consciousness, and gathering there, furnish the material for new combinations. In the case of this intuition of Paul, this will have to be presupposed so much the more, because it is not difficult to prove the fact of parallels to his doctrines of Christ and redemption in both Jewish and heathen quarters. The idea of Christ as a supermundane, spirit-being, a heavenly man superior to the angels and primordial son of God,—this was known to Paul through the Jewish apocalyptic writings.*

* Daniel (7, 13) is generally credited as the source, but perhaps it lies still further back; we cannot make a positive assertion yet, but there is food for thought in the fact that as early as the Indian legend, the heavenly spirit-being which appears in Buddha and other redemptory personages is designated as "the great man," while certain Jewish-Christian Gnostics have it that the redeemer-spirit which appeared in Jesus is the same as the one incarnated first in Adam. It may be that this has some bearing on the spiritual ideal-man which Philo found in I Mos. 1.

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It was easier for Paul to carry this conception over to Jesus making him the earthly incarnation, the heavenly Son of God, who appeared periodically, because Paul had not personally known the historical Jesus and because his visionary sight had had only the light-figure of the heavenly Messiah Jesus as its object. In fact, Paul was much inclined to identify this Messiah with those ancient heavenly men of the apocalypses, and thus, to regard Jesus, the man of earth, as the episodic appearance of a supermundane spirit-being in human shape. Equally simple is the explanation of the Pauline doctrine of redemption by the presuppositions involved in the heathen and Jewish mode of thought in that time. In Judaism, the primitive popular idea of the vicarious, expiatory sacrifice (which is the real basis of the well known description of the suffering servant of God in Isaiah 53) had developed into the theory accepted by the Pharisaic school, that the martyrdom of the righteous has the effect of wiping away all guilt and atoning for the sins of the whole nation, an effect equal to that of the Atonement Day: thus, in the fourth book of Maccabees, the blood of the pious martyrs is called the expiatory sacrifice by which God saves Israel. The martyrdom of Jesus was a fact which Christians were called upon to interpret and to justify in their religion. How natural it seems to apply that theory to this special case and thus do away with the reproach of the cross! One question is entirely disregarded: why

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was any atoning sacrifice of blood absolutely necessary in order to make the forgiveness of sins possible? The fact to be explained and the explanatory theory were given presuppositions; they were simply accepted and combined. It is possible that this combination dates from the early-congregation and that Paul took over from it the general thought "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15, 3). In any event, the thought had no such bearing in the early-congregation as Paul gave to it; Christ's death is the end of the Law, according to him, and the founding of a new alliance, a new religion for all of those who, by faith and baptism, enter into community with Christ, his death and his resurrection—at once, the death of the old man in themselves and the birth of the new man. "That one died for all, therefore all died. Wherefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (II Cor. 5, 14, 17.) This mystical idea of the death of Christ, which includes and justifies the death and rebirth of Christians in mysterious fashion, was entirely strange to the early-congregation and cannot be deduced as a simple consequence of the conception of the atoning sacrifice. Where is the explanation to be found? It has been held that Paul's experience of inner change through his Christian faith is explanatory; but it is open to debate whether for that theory the subjective experience is an adequate explanatory motive.

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Perhaps Paul was influenced by the popular idea of the god who dies and returns to life, dominant at that time in the Adonis, Attis and Osiris cults of Hither Asia (with various names and customs, everywhere much alike). At Antioch, the Syrian capital, in which Paul had been active for a considerable period, the main celebration of the Adonis-feast took place in the spring-time; on the first day, the death of Adonis, "the Lord," was celebrated, while on the following day, amid the wild songs of lamentations sung by the women, the burial of his corpse (represented by an image) was enacted; on the next day,* proclamation was made that the God lives and he (his image) was made to rise in air.† During the joyous feast of the resurrection of the god in the closely-related Attis celebration, the priest anointed the mouths of the mourners with oil and repeated the formula:

> "Good cheer, ye pious! As our god is saved,
> So shall we, too, be saved in our distress."

The rescue of the god from death is the guarantee of a like rescue for the adherents to his cult; in the mysteries of Attis, Isis and Mithra, the fact that the worshippers partook of the god's life by the mystical participation in his death, was visualized by such rites, which employed symbols showing the death of

* In the Osiris celebration, it was the third day after the death; while in the Attis celebration, it was the fourth day.

† Lucian, de dea Syria, 6. It is noteworthy that the Greek church has preserved a similar ceremony in its Easter celebration down to our own day.

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the initiate, his descent into Hades and his return. Hence, this ceremony was called the "rebirth to a career of new salvation," a "holy birthday." In one Mithra liturgy, the newly initiated pray: "Lord, reborn I depart; in that I am lifted up and because I have been lifted up, I die; borne by that birth which produces life, I will be saved in death and go the way which thou hast established, according to thy law and the sacrament which thou hast created."*

The relation of these ideas and customs to Paul's mystical theory of the death and resurrection of Christ and the participation of the baptized therein is too striking to avert the thought of influence exerted by the former on the latter. Though Jewish and heathen ideas may have been taken up in Paul's doctrine of salvation, they were transformed into something new,—into forms of expression of the ethical-religious spirit of Christ. Instead of heathen nature-gods, he sets up *the one Lord* who is the Spirit, the original son of God or ideal man, who atoned for the sin of Adam's descendants by obedience and love and opened up a new human-divine life for our race; his death is not a phenomenon of nature, but is a moral act, the self-sacrifice of sacred love (Gal. 2, 20; II Cor. 5, 15; Phil. 2, 8) yielding its own life in the service of the brothers; thus, he engenders in the faithful, not only the hope of a future life, but a present moral,

* A. Dieterich, "Eine Mithrasliturgie," page 106.

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new life, inspired and borne by the holy spirit of love, of peace and of joy. This combination of mystical enthusiasm with the ethical-social spirit of the Prophets and Jesus—this was the genial inspiration, which made Paul the founder of Christian theology and Church.

A further review of the main points of Paul's doctrines confirms the foregoing. The double viewpoint under which he considered the salvation through Christ—juristically, as the vicarious, atoning sacrifice, and mystically as the conquest of death and creation of life—is seen again in his description of the condition of the saved. The gospel of Christ, the son of God and the redeemer, is an object of faith and awakens the faith of those who acknowledge its saving power and trustfully accept it. The believer is "justified," which means that he is judged by God to be one who has been atoned for in the death of Christ, and stands no longer under the damning Law, but under pardoning grace. He is "adopted as a son of God," which means that he may feel himself to be an object of God's fatherly love, a free son and heir of the prophecies, one who needs no longer to tremble before the curse of the Law and bow slavishly before its correcting rod.

But how? asked the adherents of the Law, does not such a teaching destroy morality and discipline, does it not give free rein to the sinful pleasures and degrade Christ to the level of one who furthers sin? Not at all, answered Paul, the faith of Christ which

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releases from the Law of the letter, does at the same time bind to a new law, which has the advantage of regenerating and the power to move both will and energy, it is the law of Christ's *spirit*. At this point, the new mystical-enthusiastic method of treatment enters into play. Before Paul's time, it had been known that believers in the Messiah were receptacles of the spirit; this had been evidenced by the ever-recurring miraculous appearances, the ecstasies, the tongue-speaking, the prophecies, the wonder-cures,—phenomena which the animistic metaphysics of the masses of that period interpreted as the influence and inherence of a supernatural spirit being. Paul, too, made these enthusiastic phenomena and their popular interpretation his starting point, but, later, he gave them the deeper ethical bent. The spirit dwelling in a Christian is not only the cause of temporary miraculous effects, but is also preferably the power creating a permanent new life of the whole personality,—the power of true knowledge, of good volition and action. As Paul felt himself to be a new man from the time of his conversion, one in whom, instead of the old carnal and sinful I, there lived Christ, the Son of God (Gal. 2, 20), so he believed that Christ's spirit produced a new religious-moral character in every Christian. Therewith, Paul transformed the early-Christian enthusiasm, whose ecstatic expressions were so closely related to the orgiastic features of the heathen mysteries, into the principle of a new ethics, which employed the pathos

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and the power of that enthusiasm in the service of the moral ideals of the life of the congregation; at one and the same time, he conquered the naturalism of the heathen mystery-cults, and the legalism of Jewish ethics, in that he infused an ethical content into religious mysticism and quickened morals by religious enthusiasm. Both are summed up in the characteristic passage: "Now the Lord is the spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (II Cor. 3, 17.) In the place of a variety of unclean spirits and deities of heathen worship, there appears the *one* master-spirit whose nature is "holiness" (Rom. 1, 4), meaning moral purity and love, and in the place of the commanding and condemning letter of the Law appears the spirit of the child-relation which is freedom because it is moral quickening.

From this central point of his theology, Paul's teachings on morals and mysteries are to be understood and appreciated. His is an idealistic ethics, closely related to the Stoic, but more strongly based on religion. The Stoic and Pauline ethics agree on the three main points: freedom from the world, conquest of sensuality and brotherly love. In detail, the parallelism is often most astonishing, particularly in the sayings about the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, about the vanity of earthly life contrasted with the glory of the life beyond, and about the weakness and sinfulness of all men which,

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serving as a dark background, throws into glorious light the ideal of the Christian (for which the Stoics put "the wise man").* But while that pessimistic presupposition rendered the realization of their ideal problematical for the Stoics, causing it to lose in motive-power, Paul saw in the Christ, who became our brother and model in Jesus, the ideal of the good completely realized; as the ideal of the good coming into realization, he regarded the consecrated congregation of believers, who, filled with the Christ spirit, felt their one task to be the increasing growth of their living and doing toward the realization of that which they are in their religious consciousness, spirit-beings, children of God, saints.

The fundamental in this new ethics is: "Become, what you are!" In Paul's words: "If we live by the spirit, by the spirit let us also walk" (Gal. 5,26). For this reason, the congregation of believers is called "the body of Christ"; they form a social organism with the Christ-spirit as its soul. In a certain sense, they are the enlarged and historically-enduring appearance of that heavenly ideal-man, who made his initial appearance in the individual form in Jesus. If the congregation is the mystical body of Christ, the connection of its members can only be established by mystical acts. By baptism, the immersion of the baptized in water not only

* Seneca, too, speaks (in Epist. 41) of a "holy spirit" living within us as a guardian of the good, of a divine power moving the souls of the good, residing in heaven, but sent down to us so that we may recognize the divine.

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symbolizes the death of the former man with Christ, the emergence from the water not only symbolizes the resurrection of the new man in community with the resurrected Christ, but the symbolical picture does become a mystical reality. (Rom. 6, 1 seq.) Hence the baptised man has "put on Christ" (Gal. 3, 27); henceforward he lives "in Christ" as Christ in him, or as the spirit of Christ or of God lives in him—all of these expressions have essentially the same meaning (cp. Rom. 8, 9), viz.: the new state of the saved man lifted beyond his mere natural self, feeling himself united with God; formally analogous to the states of religious rapture in which the heathen participants in orgiastic cults felt themselves being in God or filled with God.* Paul connected the Lord's Supper with baptism and was the first to give it the meaning of a sacramental act of worship; in the earlier congregation, it had not been that, but it had been a love-feast, the expression and means of fraternal community. According to Paul, the Lord's Supper is partly a service in remembrance of the martyrdom of Christ as the means of establishing the new covenant, and by participation in this act, they confessed themselves to membership (I Cor. 11, 23-27); partly, it is a mystical community of the blood and body of Christ, mediated by the drinking of the sacramental cup and eating of the sacramental bread, whereby the participants

* The word enthusiasm comes from the "being in God"; therefore, it was originally a technical term of religious mysticism.

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achieve and strengthen alliance with their master and with one other, just as the heathens enter into community with their demons by the sacrificial meal (I Cor. 10, 16-22).

This analogy to heathen acts of worship, which Paul himself drew, is an analogy which holds throughout the Pauline teachings of the sacraments; and the analogy is not mere chance but rests on a more or less direct influence. In the mysteries of Eleusis, Isis, and Mithra, an immersion in water was employed as the means of purification from sin and as the "picture of resurrection." One Mithra liturgy uses this act of consecration as a picture of death and renascence, exactly as Paul did in Romans 6. In the Attis mysteries, there was eating and drinking as a sacrament, whereby the consecrated was thought to enter into community with the god and his life after the resurrection from death, and thus to acquire for himself the guarantee of immortal life. A sacred meal was part of the Mithra mystery also, and there bread as well as a cup of water were presented with prayers of consecration.* The old Christian apologists found these analogies so striking that they believed them explicable only as imitation or prophetic anticipation of the Christian sacraments through demonic agency. The historical viewpoint finds a simple explanation: Paul, and perhaps the heathen Christians of Antioch before him, sought new forms of worship in order to sepa-

* Cp. page 158 and my "Christusbild," pages 79 to 90.

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rate their Christian faith from Judaism, and involuntarily they incorporated somewhat of the rites and ideas of their heathen surroundings. That the magical idea of the material mediation of spiritual activities slipped in, was inevitable where the animistic world-view was so general and so predominant; and it is not surprising that Paul's thought shows traces of it,* while the post-apostolic Church takes it up more largely. But it remains ever true, that Paul made these traditional forms the expression of deep and genuinely Christian thoughts: the baptism was a symbol of that fundamental of Christian ethics, "Die and become!" the Lord's Supper a service of remembrance of the death of Jesus and a pledge of divine-human love, uniting the members with the head and with one another,—how far above all heathen mysteries do these stand! The spirits of the demons, the wildness of the orgies, the naturalistic licentiousness, blind superstition—these disappeared before the spirit of the Master, who is freedom and love.

More important than the heathen were the Jewish influences on the theology of Paul. We met them before in the juristic theory of the vicarious atonement of Christ and justification on that ground. But they have a particularly strong influence over Paul's view of *the beginning, course and end of*

* Such is the custom of the Corinthians (not reproved by Paul), of performing baptism in favor of the dead (I Cor. 15, 29); also, the idea of the physical harmfulness, even deadly effect of unworthy participation in the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11, 29 seq.).

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human history. Jewish theology before Paul had taught that by Adam's fall, sin and death had come into the world and caused the subjugation of the whole human race to these demonic powers. Paul agrees with the author of the "Wisdom of Solomon" in judging heathenism as childish ignorance, inexcusable desertion from a recognized God whose wrathful judgment will punish the heathen. Abraham was justified on account of his faith and became the father of all believers, that is, not only of the Jews but—Paul added—of faithful heathen (Christians). Through the mediation of angels, the Law was given to Moses—a Jewish legend from which Paul draws the conclusion that the Law is of less importance than the prophecies. Although the Law in itself was sacred and had been given as a means to life, yet in reality it had proven to be no more than a death-dealing letter, incapable of overcoming sin and tending to increase it. Here the Pharisaic deification of the Law turns in Paul into the extreme opposite judgment. He does not regard the Law as a means of moral education, but as a despotic jailer and disciplinarian, who is to hold men in the misery of sin until the hour of release when Christ appears. Christ is the end of the Law and the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Those Jews who will not acknowledge this but seek their righteousness as before in the paths of the Law, they show themselves by that disobedience to the saving will of God to be such as He has

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blinded and hardened in order to reject them and substitute the heathens in their stead as the heirs to the prophecies. By applying the doctrine of predestination (taught in the Pharisaic schools) against the Jews instead of against the heathens as was customary, Paul interprets the experience of his time as an effect of the providential plan of God, who by free choice shows mercy to one (the heathen) and rejects the other (the Jew). Yet he consoles himself with the hope that this rejection of his people is not final, but that after the heathen have entered into the realm of Christ, the Jews will some time follow their example. Then the end of time will have come: Christ and all his saints will be seen descending from heaven, the sleeping Christians will rise from the dead, the survivors will be moved toward him into space and then will follow the great Judgment Day. Christ and God himself will be the judges, the Christians will be the witnesses, the world and the angels will be judged. The manner of procedure at the judgment is in harmony with Jewish tradition: the judicial retribution of reward and punishment according to the measure of the works of each. One question remains unanswered: How does the judicial verdict stand toward the justifying verdict of grace on believers?

Alongside this Jewish-Pharisaic doctrine of the end of all things, we find in Paul the Hellenic hope (not unknown to the apocalyptic writings) of a blessed life of pious souls immediately after death,

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independent of the resurrection; this thought grew in importance for him when bitter experiences made it doubtful whether he would live to see the realization of his former hope of the return of Christ. It is not clear how this bliss of the individual pious souls beyond harmonizes with the resurrection of bodies which is to follow the end of the world and the Judgment Day. Equally uncertain are the answers to the questions: whether Paul expected a series of resurrections; after the Christians had been resurrected, was there to be a resurrection of all men? Whether there was to be an earthly kingdom of Christ between Christ's return and the end of the world (the "chiliastic kingdom" of the Apocalypse of John)? Again, how he thought concerning the subordination of Christ to the Father after all the powers inimical to God had been overcome? Finally, whether the last goal, that "God is all in all" presupposed the conversion of the godless ("universal return") or their utter destruction? whether, alongside the bliss of the elect, the destruction of the rejected will continue as eternal misery? This obscurity of the end of all things is involved in the nature of the problem, and it is to the Apostle's honor that he did not enter into such detail in his forecast of the beyond as did the Orphic and Jewish apocalyptic writers, but, satisfied not to know, he found peace in the pious hope: "What no eye hath seen and no ear hath heard, what ne'er hath entered into human heart, that hath God in store for those who love Him."

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It is self-understood that a theology made up of so many and such varied elements as that of Paul, was not fully developed at once in the soul of the originator; from the beginning, his view of Christ may have been fixed at the time of his conversion, but the further developments were, without doubt, conditioned by the needs of his missionary activity as they arose, partly in his controversies with Jewish opponents, partly in consideration of the religious ideas and ceremonial customs of the heathen, who became converted to Christ. It is doubtful whether, after his conversion, Paul immediately undertook the missionary work among the heathen; his question (Gal. 5, 11) "if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?" seems to point to the fact that for a time he did his missionary work along the Jewish lines of the older Apostles. This would be the simplest explanation why his fourteen years of missionary activity in Syria and Cilicia were not frowned upon by the Jewish congregations of Palestine, but, on the contrary, occasioned joy and thanks to God, as he testifies in Gal. 1, 21 seq.

In any event, so much is certain, that not Paul, but several unknown men from Cyprus and Cyrene converted the first heathen-Christians at Antioch (Acts 11, 20). Barnabas induced Paul, who was at his home in Tarsus, to come to Antioch, and the united activity of the two produced such good results that a great number of heathens joined the congregation during the year. In this mixed con-

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gregation the fact was manifest for the first time, that Christianity is a religion with distinguishing characteristics, differentiating it from Judaism; then, for the first time, the new name "Christians" was used to designate the believers in Jesus. (Acts 11, 25 seq.) This report deserves more consideration than it has received hitherto; it is the more reliable, because it is probably original in the diary of Luke's journeys;* and because the latter was a native of Antioch, probably one of the heathen-Christian converts made by Paul. The use of the Christian name in Antioch is indubitable testimony that the *thing* itself, viz.: Christianity as a new religion differing from Judaism as well as from heathenism, came into being for the first time at Antioch as the fruit of Paul's activity there. As a religious community, the Christian congregation could only be distinguished if it ceased to maintain the Jewish customs and supplanted them by new and distinguishing ones. But religious ceremonies cannot be created from nothing, they always follow something already existing: where else could the mixed congregation take their peculiar non-Jewish ceremonies, which would distinguish them as the new religious community of "Christians," if not from their heathen environment? *Here*, for the first time, those mystical rites were taken into the customary

* Their characteristic form of narration in the first person plural is found first in an old text in the course of that report about the congregation at Antioch (Acts 11, 28).

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divine worship of Christianity, and Paul brought them into inner connection with the Christian faith by his theological interpretation (see pp. 175, 181). seq.). *Here,* for the first time, it is likely that the belief in the resurrection of Christ was cast in its final mould as the evangelical Easter legend; particularly, the dating of the resurrection "on the third day" (or "after three days") which Paul found there (I Cor. 15, 4) and which he could not have heard from the early Apostles,* finds simplest explanation: the heathen-Christians of Antioch continued their popular celebration of the resurrection of Adonis ("the master") as an old habit, but transferred the worship to the new master, Christ.†

Granted that these are only suppositions which cannot be proven strictly because the sources are scanty, yet for those accustomed to judge these things from a religious-historical viewpoint, they have great probability in their favor. So much is

* Inasmuch as the first Christ visions occurred in Galilee, they could not possibly have taken place so soon after the death of Jesus; the Evangelical form of the Easter legend can not therefore be based on the testimony of the early Apostles, but must have some other origin, whether the one given above or any other be presupposed.

† The existence of the closely-related cults of Adonis, Osiris and Attis alongside one another caused the variation in the Syrian resurrection celebration between the second, third and fourth day after the death of the god (page 175). Perhaps this contains the historical explanation for the variations of the Christian Easter legend, between "on the third day" and "after three days." The part played by the women in the Gospel narratives of Easter (a part unknown to Paul) may find its explanation in the Syrian Adonis-celebration, in which the women played the leading rôles.

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certain: Christianity, as a new religion presenting itself in church forms of a nature characteristic to it alone, did not have its origin in Jerusalem, but in the Syrian capital, Antioch.

How did the mother-congregation stand toward the new turn of affairs at Antioch? Serious suspicions arose against a Christianity without the Jewish Law and against the reception of Christ-believing heathens in the fraternity of the Jewish Messiah Jesus. Several members of the congregation from Judæa, men who had been Pharisees and therefore still eager for the Law, believed that they could not permit the continuance of such activity as that of the Apostle to the heathen and betook themselves to Antioch, to watch these rising free customs and to suppress them. The agitation of these "false brethren privily brought in," as Paul calls them (Gal. 2, 4), caused no little excitement in the mixed congregation of Antioch, particularly as these people stood for the dignity of the mother-church. Had the Law-party succeeded in obtaining their demand that the Messiah-believing heathen must submit to the Jewish law of circumcision, and had it been confirmed that the mother-church and the early Apostles were on their side, then a successful outcome of the mission to the heathen masses was not to be thought of; the Jewish ceremonial Law would have become an insuperable barrier for the conversion of the heathen to the Christian faith. If the demands of the Judaizers had been ignored without the

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achievement of a peaceable understanding with the early Apostles, the tie between Heathen Christianity and Jewish Christianity would have been torn and the former would have been lowered into a sect, dissociated from the historical origin of the messianic movement and scarcely able to survive. In this difficult situation, Paul decided to break the crisis in the most direct and most risky way, by a personal discussion of the case with the mother-congregation and her leaders. We have a twofold report of this memorable apostolic meeting (which ought not be titled "apostolic council"): Paul's own report in Galatians 2 and the other in Acts 15. The latter differs in part and is less reliable, but both agree on the main point.

When Paul made the report of his missionary activity and his success in the heathen world to the assembled congregation at Jerusalem, the party to which the agitators and "the false brothers" who had privily entered Antioch belonged, demanded that the converted heathens should be made Jews by circumcision. In order to establish a precedent, they insisted on the immediate circumcision of Titus, the heathen who accompanied Paul. Lively disputes resulted, for the eager ones had a number of comrades in the congregation who could not reconcile themselves to the thought that in future they would have to acknowledge lawless heathens as brothers in the Christian faith, men upon whom they had hitherto looked down as sinners and unclean. But

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Jacobus, Peter and John, the three leaders of the congregation who were considered its "pillars," could not escape the imposing impression made upon them by the reports of the success of the heathen missions; they regarded it as the sanctioning judgment of God on Paul's work, which none should dare to oppose. They accepted the proffered hand of fellowship and agreed to a peace with Paul and Barnabas, by which Paul was to continue his work among the heathen, while Peter and the other early apostles should turn to the Jews. Paul's promise to make collections in the heathen congregations for the poor of Judæa may have done something toward mitigating the scruples of Jewish conservatism. Thus Paul happily attained his immediate object, the apostolic recognition of a Heathen Christianity, free from the Law, and that was without doubt a priceless gain for the continuance of his missionary work. Naturally, this agreement had been reached by evading the question of principle involved, namely, the relation of the Christian faith to the Jewish Law. The treaty of peace was no more than a compromise, giving each party the right to his own opinion, but agreeing that each party should not disturb the other in its particular field. A real harmony of Heathen Christianity free from the Law and Jewish Christianity loyal to the Law had not been achieved thereby; so long as the Jewish Law remained in force for the Jewish Christians—and the congregation had not the slightest notion of depart-

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ing therefrom—it remained a wall of separation between them and the heathen-Christians, making a peaceful congregational life impossible in mixed congregations and leading ever to new troubles.

Shortly afterward, this became apparent. When Paul and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey* through Cyprus and South Galatia (Pisidia and Lycaonia) to Antioch, they found the congregation wrought up by new excitement. Peter had come to visit Antioch, and, in the beginning, he took part in the freer customs prevalent among the Jewish-Christians; but when several partisans of Jacobus, who was for strict legality, arrived, he permitted himself to be so intimidated that he withdrew from fraternal intercourse and table-companionship with the heathen-Christians. The other Jewish-Christians followed his example, and the retrograde movement to Jewish unfreedom soon took on such proportions that the moral pressure threatened the continuance of the newly-acquired freedom of the heathen-Christians. The extent of the danger at this critical moment is evident, for even Barnabas, the friend and co-worker of Paul in the missions, was carried away by the general pusillanimous mood and reactionary tendency and forsook his former free way of thinking. Then Paul could be silent no

* Acts 13 and 14 reports it *before* the Apostle-day at Jerusalem (Chap. 15). Probably it did not take place until *after*, and this changing about is to be explained by the same pragmatical motives of the author as are involved in Jesus' sermon at Nazareth, Luke 4, 16 seq. = Mark 6, 1 seq.

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longer; publicly he appeared against Peter and reproached him, saying that his attitude was hypocritical, in contradiction with the truth of the Gospel, in fact, that it was a denial of the Christian belief, " for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." (Gal. 2, 21.)

With this rejection on principle of such a Christianity as would like to remain legal Judaism, Paul *broke* with the Jewish-Christians of Palestine; it was a breach which never was healed and never could be healed, because the two contradictory principles were unharmonizable. Paul's opponents made answer; they actually carried on a counter-mission in Paul's congregations with the avowed purpose of inducing them to desert the Apostle to the Heathen and win them over to the Law-abiding Christianity of the early Apostles. The extent of the confusion which the Judaistic agitation caused in several of the congregations, the tribulations of Paul which resulted from their work, this is shown by the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and the second to the Corinthians. His manner of defense against his opponents reveals clearly the methods of the latter. Above all they sought to undermine Paul's apostolic authority, by pointing out that he was not a direct pupil of Jesus and that therefore Paul's knowledge of his life and teachings could have been acquired solely from the traditions of the early Apostles and hence he was bound to their authority; since the early Apostles, following the example of Jesus, held

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fast to the Law of Moses, Paul's doctrine teaching the contrary could not be true. When Paul cited his vision of Christ, his opponents declared this to be the imagining of a conceited man, whose word could not be trusted, who was looking for personal glory and shaped his speech to please his hearer. At Corinth, his opponents went so far in their personal hatred as to question Paul's honesty in the matter of collections.

They also introduced positive reasons against Paul's doctrines, basing them on the Jewish-legal viewpoint: to the seed of Abraham alone had the messianic prophecies been made, for them the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. In order to weaken this objection, Paul employed all the art of his rabbinical dialectics; for example, that "the seed" of Abraham being used in the singular meant Christ, hence the prophecy applied from the beginning to him and his congregation; again, because the Law was handed down centuries later than the prophecy and then not directly by God, but through mediating angels, its position was subordinate and it could not be a limiting condition of participation in the messianic salvation. It is easy to think that such arguments (Gal. 3) carried little weight with his Jewish opponents; but we must credit them to the difficult situation in which the Apostle was placed, for out of the Law which he considered a divine revelation as much as his opponents did, he was forced to prove the abrogation of the Law through Christ.

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The Judaistic party also urged the moral objection, that with the abrogation of the positive Law all the reins of decency and order would be cut, the flesh would be free to revel in sin, and in the end, Christ would be degraded as the instigator of sin. Added weight was given to this reproach by the fact that the moral life of the heathen-Christians was far from what it should have been. In all of his epistles, Paul took pains to emphasize especially the ethical complement to his doctrine of freedom from the Law: that the followers of Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires (in the baptism), and therefore they must consider themselves as such who are dead to sin, and may live no longer for sin, actually as such who live in the spirit and are in duty bound to walk in and after the spirit, to give evidence of their spiritual possessions by morally good fruit. (Gal. 5, 13-25; Rom. 6.) In this respect, thanks are due to the Judaistic party inasmuch as their attacks on the Apostle were the means of bringing to light, in varied and new forms, the higher truth and regenerating force of the spiritual law as against the mere law of the letter. We owe to this struggle, also, the knowledge of the deeps of the Apostle's soul; we see a passionate temperament often running over in an anger not always free from bitterness and injustice toward his opponent; but such human frailties are far outweighed by the heroic greatness of the man, whose whole life is wrapped up in the sublime work, to which God

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had called him; the man, who feels himself free from the ties of mortal needs and yet sympathizes so heartily and feels so keenly with all of those whose salvation rests as a burden upon his soul, the man whose enthusiastic courage dares to set the highest goals and yet chooses his means of attaining them with such deliberation and wisdom, who knows how to treat men and sees the difficulties of every situation.

Let us accompany Paul for a little on that *great missionary journey* which he undertook soon after the conflict at Antioch. He hurried through the scenes of his preceding journey, but "the spirit" gives him rest nowhere. An irresistible force which, in view of the European shores, takes on the form of a welcoming dream-vision, drives him out to the far West, to the cities of the Greeks, where he might hope that the ill-sounding voices of the narrow world of Palestine could not possibly be heard. The European journey followed the great commercial and military highroad, along the shore through Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens to Corinth, where the Apostle remained for a year and a half; from there, he moved to Ephesus, where he was active for two years; then he returned to Corinth for a stay of six months, until he left to carry his collection for the poor of Judæa to Jerusalem (probably in the year 59 or 60); his arrest there by the Romans put an end to his missionary journeys. According to the

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account in the Acts, he used to preach in the synagogue of every town in which there was a Jewish colony, and not until the Jews turned a deaf ear to him, did he make appeal to the heathen; this interpretation, according to which the mission to the heathen was not the main object of the Apostle to the heathen, but which makes circumstances force that mission upon him, accords less with reality than with the author's peculiar anti-Jewish, pragmatical view of history. Aside from the incorrectness of the motive given, the fact itself is not to be controverted, that Paul always allied his missionary activity to the synagogues of the Jewish Dispersion; there he found the heathen-Jewish co-religionists together, and by them his sermon was most readily taken up.

The suitability of this method of procedure is so apparent, that we would consider it the most probable, even if there were no report in the Acts. The most favorable soil for Paul's missionary teaching was not among the pure Jews, to whom the idea of a crucified Messiah was revolting, nor among the pure heathens to whom such an idea was foolishness, something incomprehensible, because all the presuppositions for an understanding thereof were lacking; the most favorable soil was among the Heathen-Jewish comrades ("the worshippers of God") who had acquired a certain knowledge of the Old Testament belief in God and Israel's messianic hopes through their participation in the syna-

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gogal service, and yet were not biased by national and legal prejudices of Judaism. At his home in Tarsus, Paul had learned to know this class; he knew their serious religious attitude, their longing for a morally pure religion, their strong sympathy with the Psalmists' and Prophets' belief in God and providence, but he knew, too, their antipathy against Jewish national pride and the poor formalism of the rabbinic worship of the Law. How to overcome this limitation, how to save this mass of salvation-seeking heathens and win them for God? This question may have occupied him often as a Jew of Tarsus, but he had the answer as an Apostle of Christ, in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, but a new creation. Now he might become a Greek for the Greeks without interruption of his intercourse with them through Jewish legal scruples, and he could be a Greek to them because he was acquainted with their method of thinking and understood their language.

Concerning the manner of the mission-sermon of the Apostle, we can offer only suppositions based on conclusions drawn from his epistles, for the speeches attributed to him in the Acts cannot lay any claim to authenticity; they are as certainly the composition of the historian as those speeches which the writers of profane history in ancient times attributed to their heroes on fitting occasions—a fact which is well-known and generally conceded. Even the conclusions drawn from the epistles must be at-

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tempted with care; for, in the nature of the case, the fundamental proclamation to non-Jews must have treated matters more fully than was necessary in letters to congregations of believers; thus, above all, the belief in one good God and Judge of the world in opposition to the many nature-gods, which is recalled particularly by I Thess. 1, 9 seq. On the other hand, such theological argumentation as is to be found in the epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, occasioned by the polemics against Jewish-Christianity, would have been purposeless in a missionary sermon to the heathen.

In general, it must be conceded that the apostolic missionary sermon contained both more and less than is to be found in the epistles. It is certainly an error to say, as has recently been said so frequently, that Paul did not preach his dogmatic doctrine of salvation in his missionary sermon—an error probably based on the anti-dogmatic tendency of the present day rather than a historical understanding of first-century conditions. The " word of the cross " was not only a theological doctrine for Paul, but the central point of his religion, and as such it is natural that he proclaimed it everywhere; so he reminds the Galatians that Jesus Christ was painted before their eyes as the crucified one (Gal. 3, 1) and writes to the Corinthians (I, 1, 23 seq.): " But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles a foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

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the power of God and the wisdom of God." And we should not forget that in that period of mystery-cults and Oriental religious mixtures, it was just such a mystical teaching of the death and resurrection of the Son of God which must have exerted the greatest magnetic power over many. Just in the circle of humble folk (I Cor. 1, 26 seq.) who sought less enlightenment and ethics than rescue from this wicked world and a guarantee of happiness in the future world, the preaching of Paul concerning salvation achieved its greatest success—a success which overshadowed the results of all Jewish and Jewish-Christian propaganda. Hence the jealousy and enmity which characterized the attitude of the Judaism of the Dispersion toward Paul despite its comparative freedom of thought; the preacher of ethical monotheism might have been agreeable to them, but the word of the cross must have been the more a stumbling-block when they found by experience that it undermined their own propaganda.

Beside the message of salvation in the death and resurrection of Christ, the announcement of his early return to save his own, to raise the dead and judge the world was the vital point in Paul's missionary sermon and it was the most effective motive both for religious consolation and hope as for ethical admonition and warning. In many variations all of the Apostle's letters furnish proof of this. Because the reappearance of the Lord is nigh, Christians should have no fear of the suffering and persecu-

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tion which they now must bear, but should walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, remembering that they will have to appear before his judgment-seat and that those who persist in the service of sin will not be permitted to enter his kingdom. How strongly this message of the end of all things occupied the minds of the young congregation, we see by the detailed discussion which Paul devotes to it in the two oldest epistles (I Thess. and I Cor.). The religious tendency of the times was favorable to this message regarding resurrection and judgment; the mystery-cults everywhere hinged on the acquisition of a trustworthy hope of eternal life hereafter; that this hope was bound up with moral contingencies, particularly the demand for personal purity and subjugation of the senses was accepted as a current conviction by the more serious religious minds among the heathens of that day. In the Apostle's sermon, it received the strongest sanction by joining the hope and the demand to the message of the death and resurrection of Christ; in this fundamental revelation of the higher world, the future life of bliss seemed to appear in some measure as a reality and therein seemed to furnish both the motive of and the power for a new moral life.

The immediate *success* of the mission must not be overestimated as far as numbers are concerned; for their meetings, a private house sufficed, such as that of the proselyte Titius Justus at Corinth, or a schoolroom, such as that of the philosopher Tyran-

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nus at Ephesus. The small *congregations* were mainly made up of people of the lowest classes: "How that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong." (I Cor. 1, 26-28.) This does not mean to say that there were not several well-to-do and some of higher social standing among them; in Corinth, Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and Erastus, the city-chamberlain, belonged to the congregation-union.

Some have compared the young Christian congregations with the Jewish synagogue, others again, with the various heathen worshipping-societies; in fact, in common with the synagogue, there was the meeting for worship without sacrificial rites, simply prayer, scriptural reading and edificatory addresses; in common with the latter societies, they performed the consecrating service of the sacraments and the religious fraternal meals. But what differentiated them essentially from both was the absence of any external organization; there were no regulations, no leader with official prerogatives, no common treasury, no obligation on the part of the members to contribute fixed dues and no other communal duties according to regulation. Though the Acts tell that Paul and Barnabas installed a "presbyter" as the regular leader of the newly-founded congre-

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gations; yet by this the writer has transferred an institution of the post-apostolic period back into the days of the Apostle, according to whose letters no such things existed. In the heathen-Christian congregations of the Pauline mission, the self-government of the single congregations is so palpable, that it excludes any government by professionals and particularly any office of a guiding teacher—for there was no other teaching in the congregation than that which depended on individual talent and the free impulse of the believers.

The hypothesis of a governing office contradicts all references in the source-books. Paul always writes to the entire congregation; even where he calls upon them for united measures, he does not employ the mediation of any congregation-official. No governing office is as yet required in order to achieve the unification of the congregation; the binding tie is the meeting for general edification and for the Lord's Supper. When disorders or mistakes occur in the congregation, the Apostle turns to the entire congregation with his demand that they employ gentle or sterner correctives, according to the circumstances (Gal. 6, 1); or in the case of the grievous sinner who gave offense, he asked exclusion from the brotherhood by all gathered together (I Cor. 5, 3). He demands that difficulties among the members concerning property be referred to fraternal tribunals. If there is to be a collection for the poor of Judæa, each member voluntarily gives

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what he thinks proper, and delegates, elected by the entire congregation, are deputed to bear it to its destination. It is true that Paul often speaks of "those over you," who are active for the congregation and who are to be held in love for the sake of their endeavors; but it is clearly recognizable that no legally settled office but a voluntary performance of service is meant here, a labor which one, generally the first convert, as Stephanas in Corinth, had taken upon himself for the care of their common affairs; the Apostle urges that these services, voluntarily performed, entitle the volunteers to the frank and grateful recognition and subordination of the others.*

As yet, everything is imbued with the spirit of freedom and of love, on the basis of mutual fraternal assistance and admonition. Because the enthusiasm of faith and of love inspired all, there seemed to be no need of external forms of authority. There was no thought of preparing regulations for the future, because the return of Christ to regenerate the world was momentarily expected; hence, there was no such consideration as the historical development of the Church.

The first epistle to the Corinthians affords a very vivid picture of the fresh and rich life created by the new spirit in the heathen-Christian congregations, as well as of the various dangers which naturally accompanied the unbounded enthusiasm. At the meetings for the purpose of worship, absolute free-

* I Thess. 5, 12 seq.; Rom. 12, 8; I Cor. 16, 15 seq.

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dom of speech prevailed and every one contributed to the edification of the congregation according to the gift with which the spirit graced him: one intoned a psalm or hymn, another poured forth an instructive address relating either to some passage of the Old Testament, which had been read or explanatory of some traditional saying of the Master; a third, inspired to prophecy, would proclaim the revelation which had come to him concerning the secrets of God's plans, the affairs of the future or the soul of man, and while such an one was speaking, another such prophet would feel himself compelled to utter his revelation; or another, "speaking with tongues," would launch forth a torrent of incomprehensible words and sounds in his ecstasy, so that a stranger might get the impression that he was mad. Women crowded forward to pray and prophesy, emphasizing their Christian freedom by throwing off the veil which custom demanded. Thus, the meetings were so tumultuous that the freedom threatened to degenerate into disorder.

Though the Apostle did not wish to dampen ardor or to lessen freedom, yet he reminded his Corinthians that God was a God of order and that the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets; hence, many should not speak at once but one should follow the other and the "tongue-speaker" should reserve his ecstatic monologue until he or his neighbor could add thereto a sensible edificatory explanation. As to the women, when they appear before the assem-

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blage for prayer or prophecy, they should don their veils as a sign of modesty; unusual as it was in the Greek world of that time, Paul did not forbid the public speaking of women. The passage to the contrary (I Cor. 14, 34 seq.) was probably inserted by a later writer.

The disorders at the communion celebration had to be condemned more earnestly than these exuberances of enthusiasm. It had not yet become a mere act in the liturgy, but was an actual meal like the "bread-breaking" of the early-congregation and like the common meal of the Greek societies, except that these were paid for out of a common treasury or provided by an individual member, whereas the Christian fraternal meal was made up of contributions from every one. It happened at Corinth, that the rich did not wait for their poorer brethren and divide with them, but they ate their rich food in advance and drank heavily while the poorer ones were hungry and ashamed. The Apostle deems it an unworthy eating and drinking, a sin against the body and blood of Christ which causes the report that disease and death have visited some members of the congregation as a result. He admonishes them to test themselves and consider the meaning of the Lord's Supper as contrasted with a common meal; further, the eating which is to satisfy the cravings of hunger should be done at home, before they start for the meeting of the congregation. This advice is the beginning of the division between the actual

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meal and a sacramental act; besides, the connection between the two grew more and more purposeless with the growth of the congregation.

The *moral life* of these young heathen-Christian congregations showed many a lack, partly the after-effect of old heathen customs, partly eccentric expressions of the new spirit. Some thought they might participate in heathen sacrificial meals without fear because they knew the truth about heathen gods; others were so fearful lest they might stain themselves by unconsciously eating meat which had come from such an idolatrous sacrifice, that they forbore all meat-eating. In the Roman congregation, too, there were ascetics (Paul calls them "the weak") who, by reason of religious scruples, abstained from meat and wine, holding them to be unclean things, dangerously related to the world of demons. Especially marked in the realm of sexual life were the contrasts between riotous freedom and ascetic unfreedom. Some desired to continue the customary Greek laxity in sexual matters even after they had become Christians and based their conduct on the Apostle's doctrine of Christian freedom, interpreting it in the sense that "everything is permitted," even licentiousness. Others thought that sexual intercourse was, in itself, unclean and unworthy of a Christian; hence, Christians should not marry and those already married should cease from marital intercourse.

The Apostle began by taking a bold stand against

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the lax and demanded the severance of all fraternal ties with the licentious; he admonished the Corinthian Christian regarding the dignity of a Christian personality, whose body is a temple of the holy spirit, not to be defiled by licentiousness. Though personally favoring it, he rejected the opinion of the ascetics that celibacy should be made the general rule, but rather recommended marriage to those who did not possess his gift of abstinence; he rejected the dissolution of marriages with non-Christians, where the latter did not dissolve them; in which case, the Christian was no longer bound. In such wise, Christian custom was so regulated that the purity of family life differentiated the congregation advantageously from the immorality of its heathen environment. In the question of eating sacrificial meats, the Apostle took a similar middle position between extremes: he agreed with the ascetics in their conviction that nothing was unclean in itself, and eating or abstaining did not constitute a Christian; but he rejected the idea of Christian participation in heathen sacrificial meals, and admonished the more liberal-minded not to put aside the considerations of brotherly love in the protection of the weak consciences, when they employed the freedom to which they were entitled.

A serious menace to budding Christianity was the fanatical radicalism, which was inclined to conclude that the ideal of God's kingdom of universal brotherhood meant the rejection of all existing social order.

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In opposition thereto, the Apostle admonishes Christians (Rom. 13) to obey existing political superiors as a divine government; for, since God instituted such governments in order to protect the good and punish the wicked, the Christian should be subject, not through fear but for the sake of conscience; he should show respect, pay taxes and act as a peaceable citizen. The Roman government is not a demonic phenomenon and an object of fanatical hatred for Paul as it had been for the Jewish and Christian apocalypse writers, but it represented a stage in the moral world-government and as such became an object of conscientious regard.

Naturally, such high esteem of the legal procedure of the state accords but little with the word forbidding Christians to appeal to earthly courts (I Cor. 6, 1 seq.), on the ground that it is beneath the dignity of those who are to judge the world and the angels, to look for judgment to heathens; either, they should suffer injury in silence or litigate before a tribunal of their own brethren. As Christians, Paul advises them to recognize slavery as an existing political institution, a worldly relation of the occupation, which is not changeable even by divine election to the congregation; the consciousness that the slave is a freedman of the Lord and that the free man is a slave of Christ, should be so elevating as to make the social relation of service a matter of indifference (I Cor. 7, 20 seq.); as to the rest, masters should be human and brotherly in their treatment of

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slaves, act justly and properly toward them, remembering that they, too, have a master in heaven (Philemon 16, Col. 3, 22). This attitude toward slavery was similar to that assumed by the Stoics—a recognition of the existing legal institution, making mild its severity from the viewpoint of the ideal equality of human rights—naturally, this contradiction between idea and reality was demanded by the circumstances of the age, but it could not endure.

Paul rejected emphatically the communistic fanaticism related to the early-Christian tendency to world-abnegation; he was opposed consistently to the underestimation of labor and property, and the overestimation of poverty and charity. He commanded the Thessalonians (I, 4, 11 seq.) to work in peace and eat their own bread, which means the bread they earned and did not get by begging, so that they would not need the bread of others but could give of their own. Paul was so far removed from the ideal of common property maintained by the messianic congregation at Jerusalem, that his epistles, throughout, presuppose private property acquired in business, and regard business not only as permitted but required as a means toward honorable independence of personality and charitable assistance to the needy. Naturally, labor did not thereby acquire a moral dignity on principle; the Protestant idea that labor in and of itself belongs to the moral ideal as the employment of personal power for the achievement of public welfare, this was as strange to

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Paul as to the rest of antiquity; herein, as in his judgment of marriage as a necessary evil, he was prejudiced by the dualistic view of his times which underestimated the physical as unclean and evil, hemming the spiritual. This remained the fundamental church-view and attitude, characteristically expressed by the monastic system; Protestantism first led the way above and beyond it.

Two great achievements for Christianity must be credited to Paul: he freed it from the Mosaic law, making it accessible to the heathen and raising it to a world-religion, and through him the early-Christian enthusiasm was subdued and ennobled. The revolutionary tendency, feverishly tense for the approaching world-destruction and radically negative toward existing social institutions, he overcame and thereby established the possibility of the historical existence and inner development of the new religion. Without losing sight of the apocalyptic perspective of the return of Christ for the establishment of his kingdom, he transferred the centre of gravity of the redeeming faith from the future into the present, into *that new life,* which was not to begin with the end of the world, but which existed in the hearts of the faithful, who had the child spirit and hence peace with God, freedom from the world and brotherly love. By his doctrine of the Christ-spirit and its inworking in Christians as the members of Christ's body, he anticipated the future, catastrophic world-regeneration and spiritualized the Jewish-messianic

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kingdom of the early-congregation, into an ethical-religious kingdom, now existing in righteousness, peace and joy of the holy Spirit. (Rom. 4, 17.) He relegated the unhealthy dreams of the future which comported ill with the tasks of reality, back of the "reasonable service" (Rom. 12, 1), which shows itself pleasing to God and worthy of men by service to neighbors and the fulfillment of social duties. He restored government, marriage, property and labor to their own and obstructed the communistic tendencies, the idleness and the beggary of the oldest messianic-congregations. In short, he led Christianity through the critical years of enthusiastic childhood into the path of an ordered church-existence, saving its historical future, making possible its ecclesiastical development.

But the price which had to be paid for this immense profit and progress was the differentiation between the super-temporal Christ-spirit and the historical person Jesus, as well as the envelopment of that ideal principle in the mythical form of a spirit-being, descended from heaven to earth and made human. This was the initial step on the path to the Gnostic speculations on spirits and gods beyond, which threatened, by their very abundance in the second century, to dissolve Christianity into a mythical dream-picture and cause the evaporation of its historical-moral character. Pauline theology, with its slight tendencies to Gnosticism and almost absolute independence of the life and teachings of Jesus,

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was not an adequate defense against this menace to Christianity. This lack on the historical side necessitated a complement. Though written in the post-Pauline period and partially composed under the influence of Pauline thoughts, the three older Gospels performed this service, for they had the traditions of the early-congregation concerning the life and teaching of Jesus as a basis. The fusion of this comparatively historical memory-picture of Jesus with the Pauline speculation on the heavenly Christ-spirit, resulted in John's conception of Christ, which contained *in nuce* the church-doctrine of the incarnation and the double nature of the God-man.

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THE THREE OLDER GOSPELS

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THE THREE OLDER GOSPELS

It may be accepted to-day as a certain result of the industrious Gospel-research of the last century, that Mark is the oldest of the canonical Gospels and is the ground-work for Luke and Matthew; also, that aside from Mark, there did exist a source-book written in Aramaic, which was part of the ground-work of the other Gospels. Did this Aramaic source contain merely a collection of the sayings of Jesus or were there narratives also in it, so that it might be termed "the earliest Gospel?" Was this one of Mark's sources aside from oral tradition? On these questions, opinions differ. For various reasons, I am inclined to accept the latter theory as the more probable.

The early origin of Mark is indicated not only by the relatively greater naturalness and historical probability of the order of the Gospel story in general, but especially by certain peculiar features of the presentation of the person of Jesus. Little as it can be denied, that the apologetic motives of the general Gospel tradition and Pauline views of faith in particular are dominant, yet a comparison with the other Gospels reveals that Mark represents an earlier stage of apologetic authorship and hence a comparatively clearer and more naive presentation of tradition.

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According to Mark (as in the speeches of the Acts), Jesus is the Son of God by virtue of the gift of the spirit at the baptism, with which this Gospel begins; it knows nothing of a supernatural birth or childhood story. His mother and family have no premonition of his higher mission, let alone higher descent. (Mark 3, 20-31.) His miraculous power is not yet without limit, but conditioned by the belief of his environment (6, 5 seq.); also partially employing natural means and successively engaged (7, 32 seq.; 8, 23 seq.), he is not entirely removed from the category of the wonder-workers of his time. His knowledge, too, is not unconditioned (13, 32). Often human emotions, such as indignation, anger and impatience at the misunderstanding of the people and of his disciples are ascribed to Jesus; while the milder features which Luke emphasizes in his picture of the merciful savior of the sinful, are rare. As Mark describes him, Christ is above all the heroic reformer, who from the beginning does not avoid the struggle with the ruling Jewish authorities but rather provokes it, who resolutely breaks with his own family, who appears at Jerusalem with the public deed of cleansing the Temple and openly announces their destruction to the Hierarchs, who preserves the silence of heroic resignation in the face of the accusation of his enemies and breathes his last on the cross with a cry of complaint at the abandonment by God—all of which is told simply, without softening the harshnesses, or

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weakening the soul-stirring tragedy by the emotional features which Luke loves; thus, this oldest Evangelist furnishes the truest impression which Jesus made on his environment,—here he actually lives and works.

On the other hand, it must not be overlooked, that even this oldest Gospel-writer is guided by a decided apologetic purpose in the selection and manipulation of his material. He wrote for Heathen-Christians and wished to awaken or confirm the conviction that despite the rejection by the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth was proven to be the Christ and the son of God by wonders and signs of every kind, especially by the wonders of baptism, transfiguration and resurrection, that his victorious struggle against the Jewish priestly and liturgical service erected a new Temple beyond the senses in the congregation of Christ-believers in the place of the old one of the senses, and that by the blood which he had shed for many, he established a new covenant to take the place of old covenant of the Law. It is the fundamental thought of the Pauline Gospel of Christ as the son of God, "according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1, 4), who became the end of the Law and the mediator of the new covenant by the sacrificial death and resurrection in glory—this great theme of Paul's missionary teaching is the theme of the Evangelist Mark, and he sought to illustrate it by a judicious selection of the deeds and sayings of Jesus. For this purpose, the

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selection is well made. The surprising number of miracle-stories serves well for the needs and wishes of heathen readers, who saw in just such concrete miracles the confirmatory signs of the mission and dignity of the Lord Jesus. Those sayings of Jesus are preferred which refer to the struggle with the Hierarchs and scribes, while those which refer to the inner life of the congregation are not so much considered, and those which have a conservative attitude toward the Jewish law and life (as Matthew 5, 17 seq.; 10, 5 seq.) are entirely suppressed.

The pupil of Paul is most evident in the speeches, which the Evangelist did not find in his source-book or in the Palestinian tradition, but created independently and for the first time fitted into the traditional material as the leading religious motives for the judgment of the history of Jesus. First of all, the passion-prophecies belong in this category; they are scattered about from the beginning (2, 20) and repeat themselves from Peter's confession on, with increasing vehemence; they are not intended merely to do away with the stumbling-block of the cross, by presenting it as a God-ordained fate foreknown of Jesus—in the early-congregation, that had been done,—but they are calculated to lead the reader to the conviction that in the passion, death and resurrection of the son of man lies the real, final purpose of his earth-life, the climax of the story and the central point of his gospel. In two passages, the Evangelist makes Jesus himself utter Paul's inter-

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pretation of the death of Jesus: "For, verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (10, 45) and at the last supper: "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many" (14, 24), which means that Jesus terms his death a vicarious atonement for the establishment of the new covenant —a thought entirely strange to Jesus himself,* hence, taken from the Pauline doctrine of salvation and for the first time inserted into the gospel-tradition by Mark, the pupil of Paul. Probably the story of the transfiguration of Jesus is original with Mark and serves as an illustration of Paul's words about the greater glow of light of the spiritual covenant when compared with that of the covenant of the Law (II Cor. 3, 7 seq.). Particularly, the remarkable and entirely unhistorical motivation of the parables of Jesus, as though their purpose had been to veil the truth and confuse the auditors, finds explanation in Paul's doctrine of predestination, according to which the lack of faith and immovability of the Jews is made to appear as something predetermined in God's plans. (Cp. Mark 4, 12 with Rom. 11, 7 seq.) It is seen that those important points in Mark which are peculiar and historically impossible, are to be attributed to the doctrines taught by Paul.

* Cp. page 128. The passage (Mark 10, 45) is probably the Pauline transformation of Luke 22, 27, where the original form is preserved: "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," referring to the service of love in the life of Jesus and not to his redeeming death.

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Nothing can be urged against the church tradition that this gospel was written by John Mark. This man was at home in Jerusalem, related to Barnabas, in close touch with Peter and the early-congregation; he entered into personal relations with Paul at an early date, accompanied him on his first missionary journey and later became his assistant again during the Roman imprisonment.* Such a man might well have been the author of the Gospel which unites the Jesus of the Palestinian tradition, the energetic hero of a Jewish reform movement with the Christ of the Pauline theology, the suffering hero of a mystical world-salvation, and thus paved the way which was finished two generations later in the Gospel of John. It is believed that the Gospel of Mark was written at Rome shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A. D.).

The author of the Gospel of Luke makes clear in the preface to his book that many have written the gospel story before him and that they were no more eye-witnesses than he was, but that he hoped to surpass his predecessors by attempting greater completeness, accuracy and proper arrangement of the narratives, in order to confirm the faith of his reader, Theophilus. For the edification of heathen-Christian readers and in order to place Christianity in a favorable light before the Graeco-Roman world

* Acts 12, 12–25; Col. 4, 10; Philem. 24; II Tim. 4, 11 (I Pet. 5, 13?).

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in general (which Theophilus represents as we take it), in order to prove the good religious right of Christianity as a revealed religion in harmony with that of the Old Testament and at the same time to show its civic lawfulness and loyalty by its history—this was the purpose of the author in writing this Gospel as well as the Acts. For his purpose, he gathered the largest possible amount of material from many sources; he took great liberties in the use and arrangement of his material, guided at all times by the apologetic purpose of edifying and convincing his readers. Throughout, evidences of great skill in authorship are apparent, the transformation of given material and the poetic gift of enriching and adorning it by new features of rare beauty; he created *the artistic form* for the new religion, the pregnant, noble picture-language which alone makes the gospel-truth comprehensible in the garb of poetry and still holds captive the heart and the imagination of Christian peoples by its magic.

This is pre-eminently true of the stories with which at the beginning and at the end he enriched the gospel-narrative of Mark, his main source. While Mark begins his narrative with the baptism of Jesus by John, without any report of the origin of either one, without giving any account of the relation they bore to another which might satisfy the Christian consciousness, Luke attempted to satisfy this need by preluding his narrative with an account of the birth of the Baptist and of Jesus, calculated to show

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by their origins the interweaving of their fates and the higher meaning and dignity of Jesus.

Probably employing a mythical tradition of John's disciples by which they glorified their master, Luke made out John to be a sort of wonder-child; for, as the birth of God's men of old, Samson and Samuel, so his birth was announced by the angel Gabriel in answer to the prayer of his aged and childless parents; at the same time, the higher destiny of their son as the consecrated prophet and his preparatory work for the redemption of his people were foretold. This half-miracle of the birth of John is immediately surpassed by the entirely *miraculous birth* of Jesus, which the Evangelist makes the angel Gabriel announce to the virgin Mary with these words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God."

According to the older legend, Jesus' messianic sonship of God was based on the descent of the spirit upon him at the baptism; but that did not seem to make his superiority to John certain,—the less certain inasmuch as John, according to the belief of his disciples, was "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb" (1, 15). There was only one way of surpassing this: namely, that the Holy Ghost *alone,* without a human father should cause the life of Jesus in the virgin Mary—an idea, congenial to the Heathen-Christians because

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of its exact analogy to the numerous sons of the gods in the mythical stories of heroes as well as the contemporaneous legends. For not alone of the heroes of antiquity, but of the celebrated men who lived in the full light of history and made a powerful impression upon their contemporaries and successors in any walk of life, it was thought necessary to presuppose supernatural origin and divine begetting; for example, the funeral oration of Plato's nephew Speusippus mentions the legend current during the great philosopher's life that Periktione, his mother, bore him not as the child of her husband, but of the god Apollo; thus Alexander of Macedon and Scipio Africanus are sons of Zeus, and Augustus, a son of Apollo; the new-Pythagorean saint and wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana was looked upon by his countrymen as a son of Zeus. Origen gave happy expression to the motive underlying such legends: "The simple incentive which induced men to imagine such a thing of Plato was this: it was believed that a man equipped with greater wisdom and power than the average must have sprung physically from higher and divine seed." Origen permitted his readers to draw for themselves the conclusion that the same holds good of the Christian legends.

While the Jews were accustomed to think of the concept "Son of God" merely as a messianic-theocratic dignity (in this sense, the passage of the second Psalm is intended and was therefore so trans-

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ferred to Jesus by the Jewish-Christians, as the original form .of the baptismal utterance shows) yet for the Greek-Christians, who were unacquainted with this broader and not actual conception of sonship, it was easier to think of actual begetting; whereby the heathen-mythical notion of a sexual act, being too strongly anthropomorphic, was supplanted by the sublimer idea that the creative power of the spirit of God, which once brooded over chaos before Creation, called into being the sacred life of Jesus, the son of God, in the pure body of the virgin. Afterward, the necessity of Old Testament proof for this became apparent and it was thought that this non-Jewish notion, so far removed from the idea of God in the Old Testament, could be based on the passage in the book of the prophet Isaiah (7, 14), which tells of the child to be expected by a young woman, and his name shall be Immanuel, symbolizing the nearness of God's help. Though the prophet thought neither of a miraculous birth nor of a future Messiah, the name Immanuel might easily suggest application to the Messiah Jesus (it is entirely foreign to Jewish theology); then, some Christian who was not entirely familiar with the Hebrew might understand the Hebrew word *almah,* which means "a young woman" in the text of Isaiah, to mean "a virgin" (which it may but not necessarily must mean), and thus find in that passage a prophecy of the miraculous birth of the Messiah Jesus. Such a bold interpretation could

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have been possible only for such as had other reasons for believing in the supernatural birth of Jesus. The original cause of this belief is not to be found in the passage of the prophet's book, altogether not in Jewish-Christian, but in heathen-Christian circles, where it had originated possibly before Luke's Gospel and whence the Evangelist probably took it and wove it into his meaningful prelude as a welcome aid in establishing the superior dignity of Jesus against the disciples of John. At least, this motive partially influenced the Evangelist; that is evident from the whole arrangement of the story and particularly from the fact that after the announcement of the approaching miraculous birth, he brings the two future mothers, Elizabeth and Mary, together, so that by the mouth of the former, the future forerunner John makes formal utterance of praise of his superior and master, the Messiah Jesus.

With consummate art, the Evangelist knows how to stage the birth of Jesus in a fashion worthy of the great miracle; varied motives from profane history and pious legends of distant origin, he weaves into a garland of lovely pictures. First he wished to show how it came about that Jesus, the Nazarene, was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, which seemed to be an indispensable presupposition for the Messiah as a son of David. As the motive for Mary's journey to Bethlehem, he uses the census which Publius Quirinius, the Roman governor, had decreed in Palestine when the country was converted

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into a Roman province. This event really took place six or ten years after the birth of Jesus and the Roman custom of estimating the population occurred at the town in which they resided, so that the census of Quirinius, even if the dates agreed, could not have been a valid motive for the journey of Joseph, not to speak of Mary, to Bethlehem; these historical obstacles weighed little in the mind of the poet-evangelist against the weighty thought of establishing some sort of connection between the birth of the world-savior and the politics of the Roman empire.

The birth-story itself is a bit of transparent symbolism: the poverty of the stall and the manger and the glow of light from heaven upon it, the greeting of the newborn savior by angelic hosts of heaven and by poor shepherds,—these symbolize the contrast between the heavenly sublimity and earthly lowliness and point out beforehand that the message of salvation is destined especially for the poor and the lowly of earth. At the presentation in the Temple, the pious seer, Simeon, greets the child as the bearer of salvation and of light for all peoples and indicates his future struggles and pains. The prelude closes with the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple.

It is the more certain that historical traditions were not employed in the shaping of these prelude-stories, because the most striking parallels are to be found in other myth-cycles, especially among the

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Buddha legends.* The Indian savior Gautama Sakyamuni was miraculously borne of the virgin queen Maja, into whose body the spirit-being Buddha ("the great man" as he is called on account of his heavenly origin) enters unstained and unstaining. At his birth, also, a supermundane light irradiates the place, celestial hosts of spirits appear and intone a song of praise of the child, who brings salvation to the world, joy and peace to all creation, and will reconcile the enmity between deity and humanity. Here, too, a pious seer appears who, by miraculous signs, recognizes the child as the future savior from all evil and the teacher of perfect wisdom. Examples of early wisdom are also told of the growing Gautama; among other stories, it is told that, during a festival of his people, the boy was lost and, after an eager search, he was found by his father in a circle of holy men lost in pious reflection, whereupon he admonished the marvelling father to seek after higher things.

These parallels to the childhood stories of Luke are too striking to be classed as mere chance; some kind of historical connection must be postulated, and since the Buddhistic legend is older than the gospel of Luke ("Lalita vistara" was translated into Chinese as early as 65 A. D.), the dependence is on the side of the Christian Evangelist; how to regard

* The main source is "Lalita vistara," the Buddha-biography which Foucaux translated into French. Extracts are to be found in my "Christusbild in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung."

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this dependence, whether direct or indirect, and by what intermediate agencies, these are questions which cannot as yet be answered. It would contribute greatly to the impartiality of this and similar investigations, if it were clearly understood that it makes but little difference in the end, whether the Evangelist absorbed more or less suggestion from foreign legend-cycles; for, in any event it is certain that he transmuted the foreign motives in the genuine Christian spirit and made of them a precious treasure, which has edified generations of Christians and will continue so to do.

Similar to these prelude-stories of the first two chapters of Luke, the epilog-stories of his last chapter are to be considered. As is to be seen clearly by the agreement of the end of Mark and the Gospel of Peter, the oldest traditions knew nothing of appearances of the resurrected one on Easter Sunday in and about Jerusalem; neither did the finding of the empty grave and the appearance of the angel to the women belong to the oldest tradition, for Paul knows nothing of it and Mark indicates the novelty of the report (which he probably shaped after Syrian Easter customs) by his remark that fear kept the women from telling of it. It was palpably in the interest of early-Christian apologetics, to base the faith in the resurrection of Jesus not only upon the appearances experienced by the disciples in Galilee (for the objectivity remained ever problematical owing to the subjective character of the experience,

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"vision"), but upon tangible, concrete proofs. This was the purpose which Mark's story of the empty grave and the message of the angel intended to serve. But this was not enough to answer the natural question: why did not the resurrected one show himself at once to his disciples at the place of his death and convince them of his bodily life? The next logical step of the apologists is taken in Luke, according to whom the disciples are not first referred to Galilee as the place of the reappearance of their crucified master, but on the day of the resurrection they themselves see him, speak to him, even touch him; they see him eat and are thus convinced of the reality of his bodily life. For the sake of this popular need of concrete proofs, the narrator did not avoid the contradiction that the resurrected body displayed its earthly materiality by the touching and the eating, while, on the other hand, his sudden appearance, disappearance and ascension to heaven proved its supermundane, ethereal nature (after the fashion of a light-body as Paul thought it). For historical investigators, such contradictions are unerring signs, that they are dealing not with tradition based on any kind of recollection, not with naive legend, but with a secondary form of legend, influenced by apologetic considerations. Besides, in his free composition of the Easter stories, the Evangelist has not concealed the art of the epic poet; the story of the disciples at Emmaus is one of the most precious pearls of religious poetry

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of all times, which the pious always will enjoy and enjoy most fully, when the childish question as to its literal truth no longer hinders the joy in its religious poetry as such, the beautiful garb of an ideal truth.

It was to be expected that the higher view of the person of Jesus as the son of God in the peculiar and unique sense which was placed at the head of the birth-story, should appear in other parts of Luke by omissions, additions and alterations. Above all, the genealogy belongs in this category (3, 23-28), tracing back, not only to Abraham as in Matthew, but to Adam: thereby, Christ is designated as "the second Adam" (in the sense of Paul, I Cor. 15, 45). Christ is not only the Messiah of the Jews but belongs to all men and is destined to become the beginning of a new humanity. He did become that by revealing to his own the previously-hidden true knowledge of God, the Father, which he, the unique "Son," possessed. The passage 10, 22: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father: and who the Father is save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him," certainly does not belong to the oldest tradition, but was only possible on the basis of the higher Christ idea of Paul, which had received its popular expression in the heathen-Christian legend of the supernatural conception of Jesus. The carrying-back of this dogmatic idea of a unique metaphysical relation of the son to the father into the self-consciousness

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of the historical Jesus whereby neoplatonic-Augustinian mysticism is attributed to this hero of a reformatory action ("God and the soul, the soul and its God")—historically this is unthinkable; the artful, rhythmic form of this hymn to Christ betrays it as a product of ecclesiastical consciousness, which originated as little with the historical Jesus, as the song of praise of Mary was actually spoken by his mother (Luke 1, 46 seq.). The way in which Luke weakens the story of Mark concerning the visit of Jesus' mother and brother is characteristic (3, 21, 31 seq.): Luke (8, 19) suppresses the purpose of the relatives, which Mark naively tells, that the relatives came to take care of him because they thought he had lost his senses; it is suppressed because the contradiction to the birth-story is too striking, but at the same the point of Jesus' brusque denial is blunted. Luke sometimes weakens and sometimes omits the conflicts between Jesus and the hierarchs and the disputes about Jewish ordinances; but as compensation, the struggles of the son of God take place in the higher regions of the world of spirits: the detailed temptation story of Luke represents him in the struggle with Satan's tempting wiles. Again Buddhistic legend affords the most striking parallel. When the seventy disciples return from their missionary journey and report that even the demons are subject to him in Jesus' name, Jesus says (10, 18): "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven," anticipating to some extent, in that moment, the

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final success of his labors, the definite fall of Satanic world-dominion. But the struggle is still on: it was Satan, who employed Judas Iscariot as his tool for the destruction of Jesus (22, 3), and who seeks to mislead the disciples to faithlessness (22, 31); and when the enemies lay hold of him at Gethsemane, Jesus recognizes it as the (foreordained) hour and the power of darkness, that is, the last decisive struggle with the Satanic power, which he was destined to fight as the mundane path to celestial glory (24, 51; 9, 51).

As Christ's struggle is not limited to the Jewish authorities according to Luke, but is made to apply to all the powers of evil spirits, so his work of salvation is not confined to the Jewish people, but is extended to the salvation of the world; both are connected insofar that the heathen world was regarded as the realm of the demons and the conquest of the latter meant the salvation of their realm. While, according to the oldest traditions, not only Jesus himself avoided the Samaritan territory but even forbade the disciples from entering a Samaritan town or going upon the heathen street (Matthew 10, 5), because he had only been sent to the lost sheep of Israel (10, 6; 15, 24; Mark 7, 27), Luke suppresses such passages and makes Jesus himself undertake the journey to Jerusalem through Samaria, and has him send seventy disciples as his messengers to the Samaritan cities and towns. (Luke 10, 1 seq.) This mission of seventy to Samaria is

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therefore not history but a symbolic anticipation of Paul's mission to the heathen, which is sanctioned beforehand in this way by Jesus; Paul's practically completed and theoretically based progress from the Jewish Messiah to the world-savior is thus carried back by the Pauline evangelist into the Gospel history, as the necessary consequence of his higher view of Jesus as the supernatural son of God and second Adam. How much greater he estimated the importance of the heathen-mission represented by the seventy than the Jewish mission of twelve, he shows clearly by the strong emphasis on their far greater success in conquering the demons and the dominion of Satan (10, 17 seq.). In other instances, the half-heathen Samaritans are preferred to the Jews in the Gospel of Luke: recall the parable of the good Samaritan and the grateful Samaritan among the ten lepers.

The obverse of this friendship for the heathen is the Jew-hatred of this heathen-Christian Evangelist. At the very beginning of the public life of Jesus, this hatred finds marked expression in the speech which he has him deliver in his native city of Nazareth (4, 16 seq.), a speech which must be regarded as a free composition of the author, like the speeches in his Acts. The historically traditional lack of faith of the near neighbors of Jesus (Mark 6, 3) is used by Luke as a pretext, to have Jesus express from the beginning his rejection of the Jewish people in favor of the faithful heathen,

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whereupon the irate inhabitants of Nazareth are said to have attempted to kill him. Aside from the silence of the other Gospels, this is historically impossible and explicable only as a premature statement of the actual course of later events and as due to Paul's opinion of Judaism and Heathenism in Romans 9 to 11.

After deducting as much as may have to be charged to the apologetic and polemic purposes of Luke, the author, his gospel has great historical value for our knowledge of the actual person and teachings of Jesus. We must thank him for a number of most valuable sayings and parables, which the author carefully compiled from sources at his command (1, 1), and which, like the gospel of Mark, were translations and elaborations of the Aramaic earliest-gospel. From these sayings of Jesus, some of which Luke alone has and others which he has preserved in most trustworthy form, we gain a new picture of Christ, making an essentially valuable complement to that afforded by the gospel of Mark: the struggling, reformatory hero recedes and the merciful friend of the poor and the sinful is brought into brightest light. Naturally, one does not negative the other, but we have every reason to believe that on the actual combination of these two equally well-attested traits of character, the heroic fighter against the Jewish powers and the merciful friend of the lowly and despised masses, the tremendous success of the historical activity of Jesus rested. With-

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out doubt, the latter side was the more important because in it the human power of salvation through a serving and saving love, everywhere and always equally effective, appeared most directly. The parables of the lost son and the tribute-money, of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer, of the two debtors,—the stories of the sinful woman who was forgiven much because she had loved much, of Zaccheus, the tax-gatherer, of the repentant thief on the cross—all of these will serve humanity as a fountain of edification and admonition, of reproof and elevation.

We must not overlook the fact that in Luke's picture of Christ, the forgiving and saving love for sinners is closely related to the love of the poor and the lowly, and the aversion toward the proud, the overfed rich and the worldlings. When first he appears Jesus declares his mission to be the enunciation of a joyous message to the poor; in Luke's field-sermon, the poor and the hungry (not the spiritually poor, not the hungering for righteousness, as Matthew altered it) are praised as the blessed who will find consolation and satisfaction in the coming kingdom of God. Poor shepherds are they to whom the birth of the savior is first announced. Poor Lazarus will rest in the lap of Abraham and the rich man will go to hell. The supper of the parable is despised first by the proud guests and the lowly gathered up from the streets enjoy it. Riches is "the unrighteous Mammon," whom it is well to

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shake off in favor of the poor. Refusal of earthly possessions and the sundering of worldly ties is the general duty of disciples. These traits of a religious socialism, somewhat strange to our eyes and seemingly exaggerated, Luke invented as little as he did the friendship of Jesus for sinners; but he did preserve them out of the oldest tradition and especially emphasize them, because they accorded with his own mood. Certain as was the right of the Church to limit this tendency, as evidenced by Matthew, so certain is Luke's preservation of the social trait of great value for our historical understanding of Jesus' work.

The Gospel of Luke was probably written at the beginning of the second century by an unknown heathen-Christian, who was conversant with the literary culture of his time and particularly versed in the works of the Jewish historian Josephus. Because he made use of the memoirs of the journey of Luke, the pupil of Paul, in his "Acts of the Apostles," church-tradition used the name Luke to designate the author of the Gospel and the Acts.

Of the four Gospels, Matthew is the least uniform in character. On the one hand, it contains the most emphatic expressions concerning the continued force of the Mosaic Law and the authority of its teachers (5, 17 seq.; 23, 3; 23), as well as the narrowing of the mission to the Jewish people alone (10, 5 seq.; 15, 24; 16, 28); on the other hand, its

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expressions are no less forcible in teaching the rejection of Israel and the transference of salvation to the heathen (8, 12; 21, 43; 23, 38; 24, 14). Christ appears as the son of David, who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, whose life from birth to death proved the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and models and whose messianic kingdom includes no more than the people of the twelve tribes (19, 28). Alongside and at the same time, Christ is the supernaturally begotten son of God, whose destined dominion over the whole world was symbolically pointed out in advance by the adoration of the oriental Magi and afterward was confirmed by the final command to baptize all peoples; from the beginning, he appears as the new lawgiver for all men and in the picture of the world-judgment, he appears as the judge of all the peoples, who metes out his fate to each according to his attitude toward Christ and the congregation.

This view of the person of Christ, going beyond even that of Luke, is particularly evident in the alteration of the traditional saying: "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, even God" (Mark 10, 18; Luke 18, 19), for which Matthew says less decidedly: "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good" (19, 17), whereby the direct refusal of the predicate good on the part of Jesus is avoided. The limitation of miraculous power, which Mark indicates by the remark (6, 5) that Jesus could not

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perform many miracles in Nazareth, Matthew avoids by saying: "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (13, 58), which changes the lack of ability into a lack of desire to do them. This harmonizes with the increased power to perform miracles which Matthew attributes to Jesus throughout; where Mark says he healed many of the sick, Matthew has him heal all the sick, brought to him from far and near (4, 23 seq.); he has the daughter of Jairus dead before Jesus' help is called; immediately after the curse of Jesus, he makes the barren fig tree rot; he heightens the miracles accompanying the death of Jesus and at the resurrection he causes a great earthquake making the watchers to become as dead men; later the same guards are bribed by the chief priests to say that his disciples came and stole the body of Jesus. Apologetic intention led to awkward construction of the legend. In the story of Jesus' birth and childhood, Matthew has lost the poetic flavor which gives Luke its charm; in the place of naive story-telling, there is a stiff, apologetic method.*

* Note the monotony of the motives in his story: five times the advice of an oracle in a dream and five times the fulfillment of ancient prophecy in the course of Matthew's second chapter! Concerning the last of these prophecies (2, 23): "that he should be called a Nazoræan," it must be remarked that it is not to be found in the Old Testament and that the word Nazoræan is not derived from either Nasiræan or Nazareth. That "Nazoræans" was the oldest name for Christians and that it became the name of a later sect is known; but its origin is dark. A recent hypothesis says that it was originally the name of an ante-Christian Jewish sect and passed over from that sect to the Christians.

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This confused character of the gospel of Matthew is to be explained thus: the most varied elements of Jewish- and Heathen-Christian tradition, the youngest and the oldest, the narrow-Jewish and the universal-church, all were fused into one gospel-harmony which is the classic expression of the consciousness of a universal world-church while in the making. In more or less sharp outlines, this ecclesiastical gospel has sketched the dogmas, ethics and church-constitution of the crescent universal church. The proximity of the son of David to the son of God is suggestive of the dogma of the double nature of the man-God. In the trinitarian formula of baptism (28, 19), which appears nowhere else before Justin, is the seed of the articles of faith and of the "apostolic symbolum." With special emphasis, the theme of the sermon on the Mount placed at the beginning reads: Christ, the lawgiver, descended from God, proclaims a new law, which is the fulfillment of the imperfect Jewish law, takes its place and must be regarded henceforth as the true revelation of God's will to all men; active obedience of the new law is the condition of salvation. That corresponds accurately with the Church view of the second century, according to which Christianity was "the new Law" and the Church was the institution founded by Christ for the education of all nations. The idea of "the Church" as an organized body, which is strange to the older gospels, is found twice in Matthew (16, 18 and 18,

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17) and begins to take the place of the thought of the kingdom of God, as in the parables of the weeds and of the fishes. The beginnings of an ecclesiastically-regulated penitential discipline are to be seen in 18, 15 seq. There the Apostles as the instruments of church action are equipped with the power of "binding and loosening," which is equivalent to making and administering church-law. This power is conferred especially upon Peter (16, 18); he is praised as the foundation rock, upon which Christ builds his church, and he will therefore be the first to get the keys to the heavenly kingdom. This saying, palpably a historical impossibility in the mouth of Jesus, contains the germ of "the primacy of Peter" and the claim of dominance on the part of the Roman Church which was deduced therefrom.

How far removed is this from the thought of Paul, that Christ is the only foundation upon which the Apostles as the co-workers of God should base their work, each in his own way! (I Cor. 3, 9 seq.)

The gospel of Matthew clearly displays the church-ethics with its opportunistic mediation between the ideal and the real. Fasts, prayers and almsgiving are estimated as services pleasing to God, which may reckon upon especial divine reward (6, 1 seq.); an ascetic life of voluntary poverty and celibacy is recommended as a higher "perfection" to those who are able to lead it (19, 21; 12); the blessing of the poor and the hungry is transferred to the spiritually poor and the hungry for

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righteousness, while Luke's four "woes" (Luke 6, 24 seq.) against the rich are suppressed and their place is taken by blessing of the benevolent, the pure in heart and the peace-loving; Luke's designation of riches as the "unrighteous Mammon" and the command to abandon that idol are omitted; so are the stories of the widow's mite and the judge's refusal to act in the division of the inheritance. (Luke 12, 13 seq.)—These are signs of advanced church-consciousness, where church policy considered the enthusiastic socialism of the early-congregation unfit and did no longer despise the possession of worldly means and the power of judgment in temporal affairs. As to the former, the church Evangelist agrees with Paul's principles, though the theology of Paul is uncongenial to him. Add the remarkable coolness toward the early-Christian expectation of the visible return of Christ to establish his kingdom on earth, in place of which we find the closing word of Matthew (sounds almost like John) telling of the constant, invisible presence of Christ in his congregation: here we have, feature by feature, the picture of the life and faith of the Church in the first half of the second century.

Self-evident it is that the author of this Gospel could not have been the Apostle Matthew. We do not know who it was; altogether, it is scarcely the work of a single author, but the work of various hands, yes, generations of early-Christianity worked at it; it grew with and out of the Church. There-

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fore it soon became the favorite Gospel of the Church, the catechism of practical-ecclesiastical Christianity.

In historical value for our knowledge of the life and work of Jesus, it stands far behind Mark and Luke. But it is the more important as a document of the growing universal Church of the second century, in which the opposition of the apostolic period, the struggle between national-legal Jewish-Christianity and the law-free, universalistic Heathen-Christianity had been waged. The aggressive rôle of the former without doubt ceased with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish state, by which it lost its national reserve-strength. Hence the editor of the Church-gospel could incorporate conservative-legal sayings from the oldest traditions, without having to fear that Judaistic partisans in the Church would gain any advantage; for, in his time, the principle was immovable that the Old Testament was Law not in its national-Jewish form (as ceremonial law), but only through its revealed "fulfillment" by Christ, that is, its human-ethical content had permanent authority over Christianity. Just this faith in the divine revelation of the "new law" and the retributive world-judgment by Christ were the essentials of the church-Christianity represented by Matthew; it was closely related to the Hellenistic Judaism of the Diaspora,* and it was not far

* The ethics of Matthew touch most closely those of the Jacobus Epistle and the Apostolic doctrine, two writings of Hellenistic Jewish-

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removed from the Græco-Roman popular philosophy, for both of these agreed in striving for a purely human ethics applicable to all men, looking to purity and goodness of spirit, and sanctioned in some way by divine revelation. The Gospel brought that sanction in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the son of God, who taught not only the true fulfillment of the old Law, but who furnished the personal model in his earthly life and who, upon his return as judge of the world, will mete out to each his deserts. The early-Christian enthusiasm with its dreams of an earthly messianic kingdom was repressed by this Church of the new law led by "Peter," i. e., Rome; the mysticism of Paul's doctrines of salvation and grace (with the exception of a few traces originating in Mark,—Matthew 20, 28; 26, 28) was repressed. But these could not be permanently lost to the universal church, for they answered to the mystical trend of Oriental-Hellenistic religiosity, as did "the new law" to the rational, ethical feature of the then Hellenistic culture. In the course of the second century the Pauline-mystical tendency received a new and growing impetus, which soon threatened to culminate in a dangerous one-sidedness—that impetus was the Gnostic movement.

Christian origin. It is indisputable that among the factors of the growing universal Church, the Hellenistic (not the Palestinian !) Judaism or Jewish-Christianity takes precedence; Baur's school always maintained this, and unbiassed historical-research scholars, Christian and Jewish, are conceding the point more and more generally.

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THE GNOSTIC MOVEMENT

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THE GNOSTIC MOVEMENT

GNOSTICISM did not arise originally either from Christianity or from Greek philosophy, but it was a religious movement growing out of an Oriental heathen-Jewish mixture of religions. Its last motive was not so much the desire for a knowledge of the world, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but rather the practical religious hunger for the salvation of the soul from the powers of death, for the assurance of a blissful life in the world beyond; in the end, all gnostic speculation and mystic ceremonial was related to this one purpose. In order to prove the possibility of future life for the soul, a relationship to the divine life was attributed to the soul, either that the soul descended to earth from the world above or that the divine being had implanted at least a seed or spark of life. Hence, in the earth-world, the soul feels itself to be in a prison or in a strange country far from its higher home; the body appears to be impeding ballast or fetter from which release is desired. But the death of the body in no way assures salvation to the life of bliss, for the souls departing from the bodies are threatened by the gravest dangers on the part of the hostile spirit-powers which seek to devour them or thrust them down into the abyss of hell.

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The esoteric teachings of the wise and the secret ceremonies of the sanctified were to serve as protection against the dangers besetting the soul's journey to heaven. Hence there was a return to primitive myths about divine and semi-divine beings, who had descended into the regions of the dead and tasted the horrors of hell but had remained victorious over death by their own strength or through divine aid, and returned happily to the earth above. The speculations of the mysteries concerning the world beyond attached themselves to these old myths, by making the return of the mythical conqueror of death, the prototype and the guarantee of victory to all those to whom the secrets of the world beyond had been revealed and to those who by sacred ceremonies had connected themselves with the Lord of life, the "god of salvation," by an alliance effective even after the death of the body. It was the object of the mysteries of Mithra, Sabazio, Attis, Isis and Demeter to obtain part of the life of their deity for the initiated, by virtue of which the sectary felt certain of "rebirth for eternity," a happy life in the world beyond.

Though Gnosticism was from the beginning a belief in other-worldly salvation on the basis of mythical traditions and mystical rites, yet there was such a similarity to the Pauline teaching of salvation that there could not fail to be a reciprocal influence. The latter, too, taught that a savior and son of God had descended from heaven, but one who

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had offered the reconciling sacrifice of death, not in the gloom of a mythical past, but in the light of history scarce completed, one who had conquered death and Hades by his resurrection, and had become the Lord and Savior of the living and the dead on his return to heaven. It was natural, that Oriental Gnosticism soon appropriated this figure of a Christian savior, and transferred to him all that they had previously said of their mythical redeeming deities. Thus was the Messiah Jesus of the early-congregation and Paul's divine man and son of God, first changed by the Gnostics into a divine being, the subject of their exuberant speculation and the centre of their mystical rites.

This Christianization of Gnosticism, originally heathen-Jewish, could not fail to have a counter-action on the faith of the Christian congregation. For, how could they permit the Gnostics to go a step beyond them in the worship of Christ? As soon as the Gnostics had converted the Jesus-phenomenon into a divine being, there was no choice left to the Church, but to follow their example in apotheosizing the Master; this difference there was, however, that, along with the divine, they did wish to hold fast to the human side of the Savior, which the Gnostics declared to be a mere semblance. The paradoxical fact, that the conflict of the Church teachers with the gnostic heretics did not involve the divinity of Christ, both being agreed there, but did concern his true manhood, is explained by the cir-

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cumstance, that the doctrine of the divinity of the redeemer-spirit was a gnostic presupposition, subsequently brought into such an artificial connection with the Jesus of gospel tradition, that the reality of the man Jesus was lost, or at least became problematical. The Church teachers, with clear vision, recognized that such a loss must not be permitted; but now that they had accepted the presupposition of the divinity of the Savior themselves, a grave question confronted them: how could the person of Christ, at one and the same time, be both divine and human?

The gnostic lack of concern in the human Christ was logically related to their general disdain of the physical world, which they held to be opposed to the spiritual without exception and the source of all evil. This Platonic doctrine of the opposition of two worlds, the lower visible and the upper invisible, had been emphasized among the Jews, so that, aided by Persian influence, it developed into that opposition, predominating in the apocalyptic writings, the present world ruled by Satan, and the future world governed by God. Thus both religion and philosophy formulated a dualistic world-view which did not harmonize easily with the monotheism of the Old Testament; the thought that these two opposed kinds of being must have different sources is so natural that it is not remarkable that some of the Jews of the Oriental Diaspora drew the conclusion and attributed the creation of the material to

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another creator than the highest, purely spiritual God.

The mythology of Babylon, the theology of Judaism, the philosophy of Greece afforded the various elements, which the Gnostics combined in their fantastic speculations concerning spirits and gods and their relation to the first deity, to the world and to man. With sure tact the Church recognized that these gnostic speculations were not merely harmless fantasies, but that they embodied a serious menace to monotheism, the foundation of biblical Christianity; and the Church declared the identity of God, the creator and the evangelical God, the father of Jesus Christ, to be a cardinal article of faith. On the other hand, after having accepted the divinity of the Savior from the Gnostics, the Church could not avoid following them so far as to place the God-Father alongside the Son and the Ghost as other divine beings; thus, the Church "trinity" resulted as the simplified companion-piece to the gnostic doctrine of the "abundance of deity."

The Church took a similar middle position with reference to the spiritualism (related to the dualism) of gnostic ethics and eschatology. True, the Church teachers were in a difficult situation in so far as all Christians at bottom shared this dualistic-spiritualistic manner of thought; because they presented the extreme ideal of world-disdain and asceticism, the edifying novels of the Gnostics also exercised their charm on Church-Christians. Yet the Church teach-

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ers were shrewd enough to ward off at least the extreme consequences of that line of thought. However high their regard for asceticism in general and sexual abstinence in particular, they frowned upon the rejection of married life advocated by the Gnostics, and held fast to Paul's teaching, that marriage was permitted and advisable for Christians in general, while celibacy was the superiority, the special grace of a few.

While the gnostic disdain of things of the body expressed itself in a denial of the resurrection of the body, a spiritual resurrection in the knowledge of the truth being placed in its stead, the Church, with all its contempt of the life of the body on earth, desired to part with the hope of a coming resurrection of the body as little as with the faith in the bodily resurrection of Christ; the impassioned opposition to the spiritualism of the Gnostics led the majority of Church teachers to the opposite materialistic extreme, elevating (in contradiction of Paul's words, I Cor. 15, 50) the resurrection of the "flesh" to the dignity of an article of faith.

On the other hand, concerning the doctrine of the end of all things, the Church learned enough from gnostic idealism to shake off the childish dream of an earthly Messianic kingdom, rank with sensual happiness, and, in the forefront, placed the eternal life begun on earth in the faith as the spiritual salvation from the fetters of the world and of death. Future bliss will then prove to be the continua-

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tion and completion of the true life. Of course, the Jewish apocalyptic hopes of the early congregation still maintained some force; herein, as before, the conflicting thought-series were permitted to remain undisturbed alongside one another, in justice to the various tendencies and needs within the Church.

Another point of dispute, concerning which the Church took a similar middle position between Gnosticism and Church-belief, was the attitude toward the Old Testament. Inasmuch as Gnosticism began as a Jewish-heathen religious mixture, it goes without saying that a more or less radical criticism of the Old Testament characterized it from the beginning; in particular, the Gnostics rejected the ritual laws as the dictation of inferior spiritual powers. At this point comes the closest touch of Gnosticism with Pauline heathen-Christianity. While Jewish-Christianity, loyal to the Law, took such great offense at Paul's opposition, that they classed him with Simon, the Magian, the supposed founder of the gnostic heresy, yet the greater number of the Gnostics were attracted sympathetically to the teachings of the Apostle to the heathen, and his religion of salvation, freed from the Law. In the same fashion as they infused heathen mythology into his teaching of Christ, so they exaggerated his opposition to the Law to the extreme declaration of the entire invalidity of the Old Testament. The Church could not assent to that, for it held the Old Testament to be divine revelation and the basis of its own faith, as

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Paul had always regarded it. At the same time, the consciousness of the difference between the Mosaic and Christian religions was so stimulated by Gnosticism, that there could be no longer any thought of upholding the Old Testament entire as a deciding authority. Again it was a compromise expedient which the Church chose; it recognized the Old Testament as a preparatory revelation which had emanated from an ante-earthly spirit of Christ, a revelation to be judged and made use of from the standpoint of its evangelical fulfillment. Whatever harmonized with the Gospels, retained its force as revealed truth; part of the balance was dropped, and the remainder adapted to Church comprehension and purposes by allegorical interpretation.

Wherever it threatened to destroy the Church-faith built on evangelical tradition, the Church fought Gnosticism; but at the same time the Church appropriated so much of Gnosticism that the consciousness of the newness and unqualified sublimity of the Christian religion as against all former religions was deepened and clarified; its horizon was widened and its ability to overcome the heathen world and culture strengthened. Therefore, it would be erroneous to regard Gnosticism solely as an element inimical to and destructive of the essence of Christianity; it was, rather, the most effective ferment of the evolution of Christianity whereby there was brought about the development of the new principles to a comprehensive world-view, rich

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in thoughts and motives of most varied nature; therewith its crystallization into a world-Church was made possible.

It is apparent on the face of it that the fusion of such variegated elements as the primitive Christian messianic belief, Paulinism, the Oriental-Gnostic mixed religion and the Hellenistic popular philosophy could not succeed at once in combining the old, the new, the Jewish, the Oriental and the Hellenic into a harmonious unity without remainder and contradictions. Various tendencies were working simultaneously in the Church, particularly the mystic-speculative religion of salvation balanced the complementary practical-ecclesiastical religion of the Law; the former preponderated in the East and the latter in the West. The former tendency took classic form in the gospel of John, while the latter determined the forms of ecclesiastical authority by the establishment of the bishop, the articles of faith and the canon. After a survey of these two authoritative, second-century achievements establishing theological and ecclesiastical Christianity our task will have been performed.

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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In the form of a gospel story, this book teaches theology; its object is to implant in the reader the belief in Jesus, the unique Son of God (20, 29). In order to give his readers the right key to the understanding of his historical presentation, the author begins, like Luke and Matthew, with the early history of the life of Jesus. He does not begin with the story of miraculous birth as they do, but he goes further back to the very first super-earthly manner of Christ's existence as a divine being in unison with God, his father.

These words are his starting-point. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then he describes the general relation to the world: that, from the beginning, he was the mediator of the world-creation, life and light of man, but not apprehended by the darkness of the world. Thereupon he causes this eternal divine being to appear as a phenomenon of history; "and the Word became flesh"; it appeared as a human being in Jesus, who is the "only-begotten Son of God," because he was the human appearance of the eternal, divine Logos.

The older gospel-tradition knew nothing of this divine being and prehistoric existence of Jesus.

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Paul had taught the celestial descent of Christ, but by designating him as "the heavenly man" and "first born of many brothers," he ranks him still among men as against God. How did the fourth Evangelist come to his apotheosis of Christ under the name of "Logos" and "only begotten Son"? Evidently not by any historical tradition of the words of Jesus which tend thereto, for such words are not to be found in the older sources; neither was it mere reflection upon the impression which the historical character Jesus made upon him—incomparably more correct is that impression given by Mark and Luke than this Christ-picture of John, the farthest removed from historical recollection. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the fourth Evangelist was influenced by the Hellenistic-Gnostic thought prevailing in his time and environment, and his attempt to ally that thought to the older evangelical tradition.

Let us not forget that Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher of religion, tried to bridge the chasm between God and the world by divine powers, and foremost among these, he named the Logos, the first-born Son of God, the second God. The divine messenger Hermes, the mediator of the revealed word of the deity, served in the same manner exactly for some of the Stoics who had personified the divine reason, which they thought of as the metaphysical principle forming and ruling the world.

In the Persian religion, also, divine powers in the

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form of angel-like beings, ranged between the highest God Ahuramazda and the world; first among them appeared the personification of God's highest messenger the "good thought" (Vohumano). In the Babylonian religion, Nabu, the son of Marduk, has a like importance as the mediator of revelation, and in the Egyptian religion the same holds of Thot, the Son of Ra. It is clear that the idea of a personal revelatory word or mediator between the deity and its worshippers was a common possession of all Hither-Asiatic and Hellenistic religion and speculation of that age.

The Philonic Logos, the mythical personification of a metaphysical, divine principle, here found its origin; as did the "Aeons," or spiritual beings of the Jewish and Christian Gnostics, the Ophites, the Basilides, Valentinus and Kerinthos. To these divine, intermediate beings of gnostic speculation belonged the "only begotten" (monogenes *) and the Logos, differentiated as father and son, but both subordinated to one original deity, out of which they came as emanations from its abundance (pleroma).

Not only the general idea of intermediate divine beings, but even the specific designations, only-begotten son and Logos, had appeared in the speculation of that day and could be taken for granted by the church-evangelist as recognized conceptions, which he might take up as presuppositions of his

* This conception is traceable to Plato, who designated the World as the only begotten son of the Father of All (compare page 34).

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Christ-teaching without the necessity of a closer explanation. What was it then, which was peculiarly new, differentiating the Christian evangelist from those predecessors? Pre-eminently in the reduction of the many intermediate beings of gnostic speculation to the *one* mediatory figure of the Logos, which no longer differed from the only-begotten son, but coincided with him in one and the same being. Again, in making the eternal divine being through incarnation become the historical redeemer, Jesus Christ, the subject of evangelical history.

Philo knew nothing of an incarnation of the Logos; in his strongly-dualistic view of the world such an idea had no place. Though the Christian Gnostics had brought the divine intermediate being into closer relation to evangelical history, they had no thought of human incarnation; some of them maintained the appearance of Jesus to be a mere semblance, destroying the actuality of evangelical history; others granted an external and periodic connection between the divine being and the man Jesus. Both ways the divine was preponderant, entering so little into the human, that the historical Jesus seemed to lose all importance for the faith of the congregation. The Church-teachers recognized from the beginning what a grave danger to the Church was involved. With great emphasis, Ignatius and Polykarp, the Bishops of Antioch and Smyrna, urged that the Son of God had appeared in the flesh, actually had been born, had suffered

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and died, that God had revealed himself in human form in Jesus, and other formulas of like tenor.

These formulas set but did not solve the problem of connecting the two interpretations of the person of the Savior, existing side by side in the Christianity of that time; how did the idealistic-gnostic person emanating from the divine being above and the realistic-historic person growing out of the evangelical tradition of the mortal become an inner unity for belief in the God-man? This was the problem which the author of the fourth Gospel did attempt to solve. The claim of the Church-teachers that God had revealed himself in human form through Jesus, he wished to establish; by making the thesis of the incarnation of the divine Logos in Jesus the theme of historical presentation, he wished to show in detail, that the glory of the only-begotten son of God and the divine Logos actually did reside in the Jesus of evangelical history and had become the object of the pious view and actual experience of the faithful congregation.

In all seriousness, he wished to narrate *history* and not dilate, like the Gnostics, on abstract theories and phantastic myths about the spirit-realm; naturally the historical narrative was to serve throughout as support of a theological thesis precedent, the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. From most varied material, oral and written, church and apocryphal tradition, he took whatever suited and worked it over in the manner best adapted to his purpose. This

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style of narrative for religious edification had long been customary in the Jewish Haggada (Legend): that sovereign freedom and indifference to the actual facts which makes it so strange to us, was unquestioned in an age whose sense of the actual was as weak as its enthusiasm for the faith and speculation was strong. While the idealization of history in the apologetic interest of faith in the Messiahship of Jesus had begun in the older gospels, yet it went only so far that the historical background is still perceivable. However, in the fourth Gospel, the history is so completely subordinated to the theological presupposition of the incarnation of the divine Logos in Jesus, that it becomes a purely didactic poem rising so boldly above the solid ground of reality, that it furnishes no data for a historical picture of the life of Jesus.

A few of the most noticeable divergencies and peculiarities of the fourth Gospel will suffice here. According to the older tradition, the place of Jesus' activity is Galilee, and only during the last days before his death is it transferred to Jerusalem; while, according to the fourth Gospel, it is mainly Judæa and Jerusalem, and only a few episodes of the first part transpire in Galilee. In the former, the period of his activity is one year at most, while the latter speaks of three Passover feasts, that is two to three years. In various instances they differ as to dates: The cleansing of the Temple is transferred from the end to the beginning of his activity, whereby it loses

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its decisive importance for the historical issue; the anointment in Bethany takes place six days, and not two, before Easter; the Last Supper and the day of his death are each put back one day, so that Jesus died, according to John, on the day on which the other Gospels record that he ate the Passover meal with the Apostles.

John chose his stories with a set purpose. The miracles are limited to the holy number seven; among those entirely missing are the healings of the possessed; while four new miracles are narrated, outstripping any told in the older tradition and recognizable at the first glance as ideal motives cast in allegorical form. The miracle by which the water was changed into wine at the wedding at Cana (John 2, 1-12) symbolizes the thought that Jesus substituted the joyous and powerful spirit of the Gospel (Wine) for the powerless and tasteless ceremonial of Judaism (the water in the vessels for purification) so that all destitution disappeared before the abundance of grace; therewith coinciding with what Philo had said of the Logos, that as the celestial dispenser of food it gave wine instead of water and makes the soul drunk with a divine drunkenness. The healing of the man who had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity at the pool of Bethesda (5, 1-18), symbolizes the thought that the true source of grace, which the sick Jewish nation had sought in the religion of the Law and the Temple ceremonial, is to be found in the redeeming words of Christ.

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The healing of the one born blind (Chap. 9) exhibits the truth that the appearance of the divine light in Christ has a twofold effect illuminating for some so that they recover from their natural blindness and see, and consigning others who, in their sham wisdom, claim to see, to the punishment of their own persistent delusion. Finally, the chief miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus reveals the double truth, parallel to the foregoing; namely, that Christ as the embodiment of divine life is, for the faithful, source and guarantee of a higher life, which no death can touch (11, 25 on); while for the Jews, the greatest miracle is but an incentive to further obstinacy in their unbelief and provokes their deadliest hatred; this last is a confirmation of the words which Luke makes Father Abraham say in the parable of poor Lazarus, that the faithless brothers of the rich man (the Jews) who did not hearken to Moses and the Prophets, would not believe, even if one were to rise up from the dead (Luke 16, 27). This parable of Luke, wherein the resurrection of Lazarus is desired but not granted, and Luke's narrative of Mary and Martha, furnished the motives out of which the fourth evangelist, with thought-laden art, composed his wonderful story of the resurrection of Lazarus, a story entirely unknown to the older tradition.

In the same way, the other stories peculiar to John should be regarded as allegorical poems almost without any historical basis. The Samaritan woman

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with whom Jesus holds the important conversation reported in the Evangelist's fourth chapter, is the allegorical representative of the Samaritan religion, a mixture of heathenism and Judaism. Her five husbands symbolize the heathen cult of five local deities formerly predominant in Samaria, and her present unlawful husband is the symbol of her present unlawful (according to the Jewish opinion) adoration of the God of the Old Testament. Furthermore, the half-heathen Samaritan religion stands for John, as it had stood for Luke, as the actual heathenism; hence, the question of the proper place for the worship of God includes the other concerning the preference of the heathen or the Jewish religion and gives Jesus the opportunity to say that the worship of the Father in the spirit and in the truth would take the place of both and had done so—a saying as far removed from Matthew (5, 17 on, and 10, 5 on) as it is near to the Pauline saying of the Lord, who is the spirit and in whom Jew and Greek are one. There, too, the Evangelist has Jesus suggest beforehand the great successes of the mission to the heathen, and (in 12, 20) he brings on several Greeks, representing the heathen eager for salvation—an anticipation of the mission to the heathen similar to the story of the sending of the seventy disciples which we found in Luke (page 235).

Many are the divergencies of John in the story of the Passion. The institution of the Last Supper at the last meal is missing, but the lack is supplied

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by the washing of the feet, in which Luke's figure of speech about the master whose slaves serve him (Luke *22, 27*), is transformed into the actual picture. The soul struggle in Gethsemane is missing; this expression of human weakness no longer harmonizes with the Logos-Christ; hence, the sign of divine sublimity (at the word of Jesus, the cohort of his enemy fall to the ground) takes its place. Jesus' confession of Messiahship before the High-priest Kaiphas is missing, and in its stead there is the declaration of his kingship over truth, made before the heathen judge. The old tradition that Simon of Kyrene bore the cross of Jesus on the way to the Crucifixion, is suppressed, probably in view of the gnostic fable, which has this cross-bearer crucified in place of Jesus. The older tradition is unanimous in saying that none of the disciples was present at the cross of Jesus and that only a few of the female disciples (the mother of Jesus not being among them) looked on from a distance. The fourth Evangelist, however, says that the mother of Jesus, two other Marys, and the favorite disciple, meaning John, were present at the cross. He tells that the dying Jesus left the care of his mother as a heritage to John. This is unmixed allegory; as in the narrative of the wedding at Cana, the mother of Jesus here stands for the Christian congregation, and the favorite disciple is the ideal apostle in the sense of the fourth Evangelist; he is declared to be the true spiritual brother of the Lord

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and the proper guiding head of the Congregation, probably in opposition to Jacobus, the physical brother of Jesus, the head of the early-congregation at Jerusalem, whom our Evangelist did not choose to recognize as a spiritual relative of Jesus.

It is a dogmatic allegory which is told in the report peculiar to the fourth Evangelist, that the legs of the body of Jesus were not broken, but that his side was pierced by a lance and that blood and water flowed from the wound, as is testified to by the actual eye-witness (the same favorite disciple John). Tradition knows no such piercing by a lance, but the Evangelist took it from a figure of speech used by the prophet Zechariah ("They will regard him whom they have pierced") and applied to Christ by John, the writer of the Apocalypse (1, 7); this figure of speech the Evangelist converted into a fact, important in various ways: first, as a proof to the senses of the actual death of Jesus denied by the Gnostics, and then as a symbol of the thought that from the death of Christ the mystical saving powers of the Christian mysteries (baptism, water; and supper, blood) pour forth.

The Easter story is also peculiar to John. While Luke has Peter alone (none of the disciples according to Mark and Matthew) hurrying to the grave at the women's announcement, the fourth Evangelist makes the favorite disciple accompany Peter, so that John gets precedence both on the way to the grave and again in the anticipatory faith in the resurrec-

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tion of Jesus—all of which is transparent allegorizing of the thought that the spiritual Christianity of John deserves precedence over the Christianity of the older tradition of the congregation, represented by Peter. This rivalry between the two disciples, as the typical representatives of two forms of faith, threads its way through the entire fourth Gospel; in the supplemental (21) chapter, it finds marked expression: while Peter, the practical, is to exercise the office of Shepherd of the Congregation, he is also to suffer martyrdom, but the favorite disciple is to remain until Christ comes.

The peculiarity of the fourth Gospel may be marked in the stories, but it is still more apparent in the speeches. The speeches of the older tradition contained popular sayings and parables about the kingdom of God, about true righteousness and man's attitude and manner of action in various life-relations which please God. Inspired by natural occurrences, these sayings are adapted to the needs and understanding of the audience and create the impression of truth to life. The speeches of John, however, move constantly in the higher regions of theological dialectics and apologetics, far above the understanding of the audience; in the whole Gospel there is not a single parable in the well-known, older manner, but in their stead, allegories such as we have been discussing or metaphors set up as the themes for long explanations, such as, Christ is the light, the life, the true vine, the good shepherd, the

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right door. The content of John's speeches is always the person of Christ himself, his heavenly origin, his unique relation to God, his mission in the world, his reception by the congregation of faithful disciples and rejection by the world of unbelievers. In the room of the apocalyptic expectation of the parousia, there appears partly the coming of Christ in the spirit, which, as his other I, continues his work in the congregation, partly as the promise of many mansions in his father's house, where Christ prepares a resting place for his own when they depart. Thus, religious mysticism and immortality beyond supplant the early-Christian hope of the coming of an earthly messianic kingdom. It is noteworthy that the ideas are constantly the same in form and content whether uttered by Christ, the Baptist or the Evangelist himself—a proof that these speeches of John did not originate in tradition, but are solely the theological reflection of the Evangelist.

The central cause of the departures of the Gospel of John from the others is the difference in interpretation of the person of Christ. According to Luke and Mark, despite all his extraordinary gift of spirit, Jesus is essentially a man, with a human history, growing and maturing through the interaction with his environment and becoming conscious of his mission. According to John, Jesus is the complete Son of God from the beginning, the divine Logos incarnate, clearly conscious of his descent from above and of the glory which was his in the celestial life

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antecedent with the Father. Hence human growth and education are strange to him; from the beginning, he knows all, prophesies all and works with omnipotent power. Just as he is, so are the men of his environment, rigid personifications of abstract ideas and types of universal species: believers who are of God, and unbelievers, of the devil. John the Baptist is the type of all true witnesses of Christ and all honest teachers of the church-faith in the Son of God, and the Lamb which bears the world's sin; Nicodemus is the type of the narrow and fearsome Jewish teacher; the Samaritan woman is the type of heathenism eager for salvation; Nathanael is the type of the true Israelite, receptive of the Gospel.

In the interviews between Jesus and the Jews, as reported by John, he shows nothing of the pedagogic wisdom of the folk-teacher, but with brusqueness he drives off the Jews, making themappear obdurate and represents himself as constantly misunderstood by them. Toward the disciples alone does the mild and winning side of the Savior's personality manifest itself, particularly in the farewell sayings (Chap. 13-17) where the mystical religion of the spiritual gospel finds its classic expression. Where there had been the early-Christian expectation of the visible return of Christ to set up the mundane messianic kingdom, we find the coming of Christ in the spirit and the lodgment of himself and his father in the hearts of those who love him and keep his commandments. In this *ethical mysticism,* the Pauline op-

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position of faith and works is resolved in a higher unity; the Christ-mysticism of Paul is reconciled with the practical Christianity of Peter (Matthew) and an ideal of religion formulated which allies the mystic union of the individual soul to God and the moral union of man in a brotherhood of love, in a manner scarcely equalled in all religious literature. Certainly this pearl of an eternal religion was not too dearly bought at the price of the idealization of historical tradition.

Naturally all these divergencies of John's presentation do not rest on a tradition historically more correct, but upon the subordination of the old traditional matter to the new dogmatic thought that Christ is the divine Logos become man. The undertaking which the fourth Gospel-writer set for himself was to mediate between the Pauline-Gnostic idea of Christ and the historic Christ-image of the tradition of the congregation. The historical judgment will be forced to acknowledge that this was a necessary undertaking and that the performance was the best possible under the given presuppositions. The Christ of the Church-faith was freed from the limitations of Jewish Messianism and elevated to the height of a spiritual principle of universal validity, to the ideal of a Son of God, in whom divine revelation and human religion are to be seen in their perfection.

Under the presuppositions of that period, such an ideal principle could only be presented in the myth-

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ical form of a divine person descended from heaven. Herein lay the danger (in Paul's writings it had appeared) of the passing off of historical Christianity in the thin air of abstract idea-poetry and the ethically valueless fantasies, such as were usual in the Gnostic schools. Only by the closest union of the supertemporal ideal with the historical appearance of Jesus, could this danger be averted. The Gospel of John wished to bring about this union by making the whole of the life of Jesus a pure phenomenon and continuous revelation of the divine principle in him, in such manner that to the view of the believer both sides present the unity of a divine-human life.

However justifiable and valuable this purpose, it cannot be denied that it succeeded imperfectly, as was natural under the presupposition that the ideal principle was conceived in the mythical form of a divine person descended from heaven; to harmonize the thought of such a being with an actual mortal person always has been and ever will be an absolutely impossible demand. Hence, the undeniable fact that the Christ of John throughout plays between sublime truth and phantomlike unnaturalness; it is the former in so far as he presents the ideal of the Son of God, or the religion of humanity, freed from the accidents and limitations of individuality and nationality, of time and space, and the latter in so far as he presents a god wandering about the earth in the mythical garb of a human figure.

It is the task of the present to discard this garb

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without disturbing the ideal in its universal spiritual truth and without burdening it with the hemming fetters of the Messiah image of the early-Christians.

Concerning the composition of the fourth Gospel, this much may be said with certainty, that an eye-witness of the life of Jesus did not write it, hence it was not written by the Apostle John. The Gospel-writer nowhere pretends to be the Apostle John, but he refers (19, 35) to the testimony of an eye-witness as a third person, who is not himself, but who is his source, namely the favorite disciple (John).

How came he to this mysterious figure of the favorite disciple, whose name he never mentions directly? The apocryphal records of John, a Gnostic novel, give the answer; therein John is portrayed as the disciple whom Jesus had made his confidant, because of his virgin purity, and to him he confided the higher (esoteric) knowledge of his divine being. Thus, we may suppose with probability, that in gnostic circles the prophet and the ascetic John, who had become an authority of the Church in Asia Minor through his authorship of the Apocalypse, was identified with the Apostle of the same name; so that, under the authority of this honored name, they might spread their gnostic teachings of the Christ as a secret tradition emanating from Jesus himself. In order to overcome this error of the Gnostics, the Gospel-writer wrested the authority of their Apostle and prophet John from them, by making the latter vouch for his own teaching. As op-

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posed to the heretical Gnosis, he set up his true church-knowledge, but at the same time he wished to contrast it with the early-Christian Peter-tradition as the *higher* revelation, transmitted by the spiritual disciple.

This explains the rivalry between Peter and his superior, the favorite disciple John, throughout the Gospel; it is the rivalry between the new semi-gnostic form of faith as against the old tradition. This middle position of our Gospel between Church and Gnosis explains the contradiction involved in the Church-judgments concerning it handed down to us from the second century: that it was written *by* Kerinthos, the Gnostic, and that it was written *against* him; apparently, it was noticed from the beginning, that this Gospel stands in a close, half-positive, half-negative relation to Gnosticism. Therewith the period of its origin is decided; inasmuch as the Gnosis of Kerinthos did not come up before 130-40, this approximating and opposing Gospel could not have been written before that date; probably it did not originate before the fourth decade, the time of the second Jewish war under Hadrian.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

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ESTABLISHMENT OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

AGAINST the growing danger, threatened by the gnostic movement, the Church preserved her uniform existence and historical continuity by the establishment of a threefold authority—the bishop's office, the articles of faith and the New Testament Canon. Toward the close of the second century, this threefold authority was settled in essentials and thereby the existence of the Christian Church made certain.

In the description of the Pauline congregations, we have seen that they were originally simple fraternities of pious faith and life, whose members knew the equality of all as spiritual men and saints (connections of God) and brothers one to another. There were no offices with peculiar privileges, only the voluntary services, which established a moral demand for grateful recognition and subordination of the others. In the post-apostolic congregations*

* The report in "Acts of the Apostles" (14–23) that the apostles had appointed "presbyters" for the newly-founded congregations is not confirmed by the genuine Pauline epistles (to which the ones addressed to Timothy and Titus do not belong), for Presbyters are never mentioned in them. Hence the origin of this class is dark. Perhaps it is based on an imitation of the government of the Jewish synagogue, in which there was a council of the oldest; or it may be that its prototype is to be found in the senate of municipal govern-

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we find "Presbyters" or "Elders" as a class of superior members, who, as survivors of the first generation, were the natural bearers of tradition and the representatives of the congregation in all communal affairs. From among these Elders, and even with the assent of the entire congregation, the "overseers" or Bishops were elected; at first, these were nothing more than a committee of the class of elders and therefor not distinguished from them. The Clergy (the select, the persons of rank) consisted of the overseers and the presbyters, from whose number they had been taken, and the deacons who performed lower forms of service, such as caring for the poor; but their duties had not yet been fixed by law, nor had their number been fixed. One congregation might have a number of overseers. Mention is made of prophets and teachers alongside of the bishops and shepherds (both designations applying to the superior). In the post-apostolic congregations it was possible for any one whom the spirit moved or who possessed the power of teaching, to address the congregation.

In so far, during the first century, the congregation, with its freely-elected officials, rested on a basis of democratic equality and freedom. Such a condi-

ments of the Roman provinces. In any event, the Presbyters constituted an order of notables, highly respected for the sake of their ripe experience or other rare qualities, and yet not necessarily all of them invested with official functions. For this purpose, peculiarly gifted individuals were selected from among them; in so far all Bishops were Presbyters, but not vice versa.

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tion could not be permanently satisfactory, because there was no protection against disorders and disruptions, occasioned by ambition of individuals or desire for innovation. Such evils, as had appeared in the Corinthian congregation at the turn of the first and second centuries, gave the Roman Clemens the occasion for a letter of warning; therein, he defended the authority of the office expressly against the innovators, maintaining that it was a life-tenure, and, in characteristic manner, he cited both the Priesthood of the Old Testament as the prototype and the analogy to military discipline.

When, soon after the beginning of the second century, the gnostic teachers confused the minds of the congregation by their errors, the need of firmer organization became apparent; and this could be accomplished only by the elevation of one bishop as monarchical head of the presbyter-aristocracy and the concentration of authority on doctrine and morals in his person.

This situation is revealed to us by the letter of Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, urgently warning every congregation to subordinate itself to its Bishop. The letter to the congregation at Smyrna is an example: "Obey the Bishop as Jesus Christ the Father, and the Presbyters as the Apostles, but honor the Deacons as the law of the Lord! No one should do anything relating to the Church without the Bishop. Only that eucharist (celebration of the supper) shall be considered the right one which the Bishop or his

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appointee administers. Wherever the Bishop appears, let the many (the congregation) be, as the church is there, where Jesus Christ is. Baptism without the Bishop is not allowed, nor may the love-feast be partaken of; only what he sanctions is pleasing to God, so whatever happens will be safe and firm (beyond dispute). Whoever honors the Bishop is honored of God; whoever does aught behind the Bishop's back, serves the devil."

For Ignatius, the Bishop represents the unity and order of the single congregation; his authority is based on the practical necessity of a strong organization, in order to avert disintegration, consequent upon heresy or schism. But there had not yet been set up a dogmatic theory of the principle of the bishop's authority, nor had he the priestly character and exclusive hierarchical rank of office; but he was to preside over the college of presbyters; these, his "synhedrin" or "spiritual wreath," are compared to the Apostles, just as the Bishop is compared with Christ or God who is called "the Bishop of all." At this stage, the Bishop is the monarchical head of each individual congregation, and not the organ of a wider church-organization (which Ignatius had not yet in mind). When the necessity therefore became more and more urgent by reason of the growing diffusion of the gnostic heresy, the idea that the Bishops were the successors of the Apostles took shape, and that, as such, they were the bearers of the apostolic tradition, in exclusive possession of the "certain charisma of ecclesiastical truth."

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The possession of the Christian spirit of truth, which Paul had still attributed to all Christians as "filled with the spirit" and which had been acknowledged pre-eminently of prophets and teachers until then, was now (since Irenæus and Tertullian, at the close of the second century) limited to those performing the Bishop's offices; they were the successors of the Apostles and possessors of all the Apostolic authority, having its origin in Christ and God. Of itself, authority of exclusive teaching brought to the bishop the equipment of all other apostolic privileges, particularly that of "binding and loosening," the exercise of the church powers of punishing or forgiving sins. Thus, from the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops soon became also "the Judges in Christ's stead," possessors of the ecclesiastical power of the key, upon whose judgment depended the salvation of souls.

The hierarchical superiority of the clergy (the bishops and the presbyters) over the lay-congregations was completed by investing them with the ante-Christian priesthood; that which had been meant as a mere figure of speech, e. g., by the Roman Clemens (after Tertullian and Cyprian particularly, middle of the third century), crystallized into a serious dogmatic theory: The bishops and presbyters are priests and vicars of Christ, in so far as they alone, representing the congregation before God, were empowered to bring the altar-sacrifice of the eucharist, and in so far as they, representing God

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before the congregation, could dispense divine mercy or withhold it.

Thus, at the price of evangelical freedom of faith and conscience of the individual, the unity and order of the Church as a hierarchically-governed social organism was founded. Under the stress of circumstance, in order to maintain itself against enemies within and without in the struggle for existence, Christianity (since the third century) adopted the form of hierarchical churchhood as a protecting cover, beneath which its true principle of religious immediacy and ethical freedom was naturally hidden and repressed, but not killed; it was preserved as a latent seed-power, until, after many long centuries, it developed into powerful life again in Protestantism.

Besides, voices of opposition to the authority of church-offices are not wanting at the beginning. That same Tertullian, who regarded the Bishops as the successors of the Apostles and bearers of the apostolic-Catholic tradition of doctrine, enunciated at the same time genuine Protestant principles as a defense of montanistic prophecy; for example, " The Church is the spirit, not the number of bishops. We Christians have been called as priests, by Christ, the high priest. Where three are gathered, even though they be laymen, there is the church. Neither length of time, rank of person nor privilege of locality has any power against the truth. Our Lord Jesus called himself Truth and not Habit. Not

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only novelty, but truth also disproves heresies. Whatever is thought contrary to Truth is heresy, be it never so old a habit. How could it be possible that the devil should be ever at work, while God's work should be at a standstill and cease to progress? For this, the Lord sent the Paraclete (Spirit) that, because human weakness could not grasp all at once, discipline should be ordered gradually, Scripture explained, knowledge corrected and progress made toward the better. As everything in nature gradually develops to its maturity, so righteousness was in the beginning Nature (religion); it progressed through the Law and the Prophets to childhood, through the Gospels it acquired the strength of youth and through the Paraclete comes the development to maturity." Clement of Alexandria, the contemporary of Tertullian, declared, not the Bishop, but the genuine ecclesiastical Gnostic who added philosophic knowledge to his faith, to be the true successor of the apostles, the true presbyter and servant of the divine will.

Thus we see that at the threshold of the incipient church-authority the protesting voices are raised in favor of the real free and progressive prophetic spirit and scientific thinking,—naturally, powerless at first against the dominant tendency of the times which needed authority, yet worthy of consideration as witnesses to Christian individualism, which never had suffered extinction and prophecies of the future strengthening of the Protestant spirit of immediate

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religious feeling and of autonomous religious thinking.

From the close of the second century, the "Articles of Faith" were regarded as the content of the apostolic-catholic teaching, which the Bishops handed down as the successors of the Apostles. Probably, it took shape in the Roman congregation, about the middle of the second century, for the baptismal confession to Father, Son and Ghost (Matthew 28, 19) was enlarged by the addition of formulæ explanatory of and opposed to gnostic errors. This Roman baptismal confession, originating in the church-need for a protective against heretics, is similar in the main to the "apostolic symbolum." Naturally, neither its trinitarian root-form nor the formula of the second article ("only son, received of the Holy Ghost, and borne of the Virgin Mary, descended into Hades and ascended into Heaven") originated with the Apostles, nor had an apostolic origin, for it can be proven that the myths mentioned crystallized in the Congregation of the post-apostolic period. That this Roman baptismal formula, which originated in the middle of the second century as a church weapon against the heretics, should have been given out as "apostolic" is in consonance with the prevailing second-century notion that everything which is believed to be the truth by the universal Church is based on apostolic tradition. This in turn was supported by the pre-

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supposition of the apostolic succession of the Bishops. These two *fictions* of the apostolic origin of the Bishop's office and of the apostolic tradition of the articles of faith are to be judged as the mutually supporting dogmatic presuppositions of the church-consciousness of the second century, which demanded authority.

Besides, it is remarkable that though Tertullian designated the articles of faith as the law set up by Christ and the criterion for every doctrine, nevertheless, three passages, wherein he speaks of them, give three decidedly different versions; two of them contain theological elaborations from his dogmatics, going far beyond the formula of the Roman baptismal symbol; thus, the latter could not have been fixed by the church authority at the time in a specified set of words. Clement, the Alexandrian, does not know the articles of faith at all, but seeks to confuse the heretics by this theological gnosis, attached in loose fashion to the general congregational tradition. Not until the third century did the articles of faith become a generally recognized confession. Therewith the Catholic Church had erected a protecting wall, which divided it sharply from heretical parties. At the same time, however, the Christian faith was weighted thereby with the fatal demand of belief in mythical traditions,—with the demand to sacrifice the intellect. From that time, all theological efforts to reconcile faith and knowledge were wrecked by this im-

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movable presupposition. Greek philosophy is not so much to blame for the inadequacy of dogmas which arose out of the theology of the Greek fathers; but rather, the mythology fixed by the articles of faith in the belief of the early-Christian congregation nullified all theological effort. To reconcile them with reason was not possible and never will be.

By their procedure, the Gnostics gave the impetus to the origin of the New Testament Canon. Marcion, the Gnostic, who taught in Rome from 140, gathered together a new Christian Canon to take the place of the Old Testament which he had rejected; for his community of followers, spread all over the empire, he took the Gospel according to Luke and nine of the letters of Paul. At that time, the Church had nothing of a similar nature to set up in opposition,—no collection of Christian writings on a plane with the Old Testament, serviceable as an inspired and infallible authority. In Justin's time the "Memorabilia of the Apostles," i. e., the three first Gospels, pre-eminent by virtue of the master's words, were read in congregation meetings with the Old Testament. In many congregations, the letters of Paul were also highly esteemed, and so were other edificatory writings, particularly those with apocalyptic contents. But none of these writings had attained canonical recognition by the middle of the second century. Even by the year 160, the number of our Gospels had not been finally fixed at

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four; the Alogi of Asia Minor rejected the Gospel of John and many congregations of the Orient preferred to use the Hebrew or Egyptian Gospel; outside of gnostic circles, no one spoke of apostolic letters as sacred authoritative writings.

Then it was that Marcion compelled the Church to oppose his one-sided Pauline Canon by a Canon more comprehensive, giving expression to the common property of the Church: the three Gospels were joined with Luke's Gospel, while the specifically church-gospel of Matthew was put at the beginning as being the highest authority. Naturally, it was not possible to omit the epistles of Paul, but proper care was taken that their suspicious opposition to the Law was rendered harmless by adding the Epistles of Timothy and Titus with their church-weakened Paulinism; then, too, the Acts of the Apostles, wherein Paul appears in peaceful harmony with Peter and all of the Apostles, was put at the beginning, and finally, the group of "Catholic" Epistles was added, giving the other Apostolic authorities, John, Peter, Judas, and Jacobus, a chance to be heard. From 180, this church canon appears as a closed collection (in the list of the so-called Muratorian Fragments and in the books of Irenæus and Tertullian). It is not known who collected them; with great probability it may be assumed that their recognition as authority emanated from the Roman congregation.

As the "New Testament," this collection was

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placed alongside the Old; it was declared to be equally inspired as the latter which long had been considered by the Church as the inspired Word of God. For a long time, the Church was undecided as to the place of certain writings in the Canon; as late as the fourth century, seven pieces (Epistles to the Hebrews, Apocalypse of John, and five Catholic Epistles) were not acknowledged as canonical by some of the congregations, while in other places, the congregation conceded equal value and inspiration to the Shepherd of Hermes, the Apocalypse of Peter, the first Epistle of Clemens, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Pauline records. The criterion for acceptance in the Canon was partly the tradition of the apostolic origin of the writing, partly agreement with the general church-consciousness as set down in the articles of faith. This last characteristic was actually the deciding test, for writings circulated as apostolic yet contradicting the articles of faith, were rejected as spurious; such were some apocrypha of Peter and the apocryphal records of the Apostles. On the other hand, the equation, Catholic = apostolic = divinely-inspired, was so firmly maintained that an apostolic origin, direct or indirect at least (as in the case of the Gospels of Mark and Luke), was believed to be a necessary presupposition for all those writings accepted in the Canon for the sake of their recognized value to the Church.

This dogmatic presupposition of the Church ex-

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plains why the Church-tradition traces back to apostolic authors even those New Testament writings which without doubt originated in post-apostolic times; such are the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Epistles to the Hebrews and to the Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, all of the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypses. For historical judgment, there can be no essential difference therein that some of these post-apostolic writings claim to be apostolic by their content, while others have been ascribed to an Apostle without such inner reason; in the first case pseudonymity is explained by the same motive which held for the Church tradition in the latter, namely, the desire to put under the ægis of strong apostolic authority everything that is recognized as true by the Church. It was the same need for a solid historical support for Church authority which led to the claim of the Apostolic creation of the Bishop's office, the Apostolic handing-down of the articles of faith (the "Apostolic symbolum") and the apostolic authorship of the New Testament writings. Inasmuch as Protestant theology has recognized the lack of historical basis for the first two claims, there is no actual reason* why historical criticism should halt or hesitate at the third claim, which has exactly the same basis and value as the other two.

* That is, no logical reason—the other reasons for bowing to *this* tradition are easy to understand from a psychological point of view, but have no bearing whatever on science (see page 23).

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By setting up a collection of early-Christian writings with normative dignity, the Church erected a barrier against the unbounded license of fantastic notions and enthusiastic conceits; it preserved the possibility of a continuous historical development in direct relation with its origin. But by elevating these writings to the plane of supernatural, inspired oracles, so as to give them unconditional authority, superior to all the disputes of the present, the Church has made a natural historical understanding of them impossible; it has wiped out the conditions imposed by the history of their period and the peculiar variety of each, and drawing the veil of myth over the actual origins of the Christian religion, it has bowed all sensible thinking beneath the yoke of a sanctified letter.

It is due to the irrepressible and constant efficiency of such genial teachers as Origen, Augustin and the like, who were nurtured by the wisdom of Greek antiquity, who enriched and fertilized Church-tradition with new thoughts and knew how to harmonize them with the sacred letter of the Biblical writings by the use of allegory—to these men, whom no barriers or authorities could suppress, it is due that the Church religion did not become rigid book-religion after the manner of Islam. When the Church authority had fulfilled its pedagogic mission for the peoples of the Middle Ages, and had become an unbearable yoke for the awakening spirit of German Christianity, the New Testament became the arsenal

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from which the Church of the Reformation took the weapons against the Priest-church of Rome. In its turn, the inspired Bible-letter soon became her new fetters. To tear loose from them and struggle through to the real freedom of a conscience bound to God only, that has been the problem of modern Protestantism since Lessing, and the solution of that problem engages our attention to-day.

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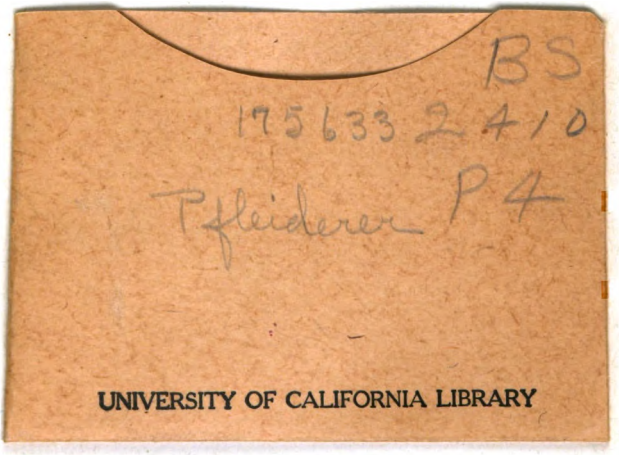

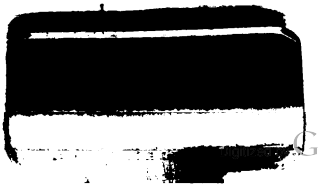

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